

# The Case of the ACCOMMODATION

Lately proposed by the  
BISHOP of DUMBLANE.

(Robert To the Leighton)  
Non-conforming Ministers  
examined.

Wherein also

The antient *Protestasie*, or *Episcopum Praeses*, is considered; and  
the *Solemne League* and *Covenant* occasionally vindicat.

Together

With a Copy of the two

L E T T E R S

Herein reviewed.

Whereunto also is subjoined an

A P P E N D I X

In Answer to a Narrative of the Issue of the Treaty anent Accommodation.

II. C O R. XIII. V. VIII.

For we can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth.

[Robt m' Ward]

18. 8. 13. 9  
(3) 134  
Printed in the Year 1671





*The*  
**P R E F A C E.**



Although there be nothing more assured, both in the acknowledgement and experience of all, then that the most important events of this worlds concerns, do much depend upon; and are frequently turned by, the observation or neglect of certain midcs and expedients only, yea greatly, recommended by this their subservient aptitude and influence; yet, on the other hand, it is no lesse evident, that in the matters of God, and of our souls everlasting wellbeing, even the Ordinances of life, by him thereto appointed, are, for the most part, slighted by an abstracting undervalue: But, as it is beyond all controversie that the full perswasion and just estimation of these high and glorious ends, whereunto they are designed, would quickly intend our care about all things and circumstances thereunto ordered in an agreeable proportion, and also extend our commanded circumspection to a fidelity even in the things that are least; so it is only unseriousness and insincerity in the main, together with the diversion of other temptations, that occasioneth all the indifferencie, contempt and mockery, wherewith we finde the simplicity & meanness of Gospel-institutions commonly entertained; and hence it is, that not only they are despised, and perverted by the vain pretenders to liberty, gallantrie, decencie, civil obedience or the like; But also they are all contending for them, under the specious affectations of more calme, sublime and serene contemplations, and the saucy reproaches of hote disputations and bitter wranglings is endeavoured to be eluded, and the things vilified into empty formalities, and thereby an inlet made, in the righteous judgement of God, to the delusions of mens inventions.

How much of these truths may be remarked in the ensuing discourse, I shall not here anticipat by an unnecessary reflection; the point I aime at is to exhort every one, desirous to be faithful to God in the midst of this evill generation, wherein the strange variety and opposition of events that vve have seen do suggest such strong temptations, and interest hath not more seduced mens mindes unto an irreligious lukewarmness, then their Spirits are most perniciously debauched by vvanton and vvild cavillation, to studie, in the first place, to have the minde enlightened vvith the true knowldge of the most High soveraignity, and most pure holiness of God, the most vvonderful love and marvellous condescendence of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great perfection of the holy Law, and excellencie of all Gospel Ordinances.

### *The Preface.*

ces; and next to have the heart established through the grace of God, by suitable faith and fear cleaving unto God with the whole soul and strength, and hating every vain and false way: Surely he that is thus qualified shall never be moved; but as he will be of a good, sound, and quick understanding in all things, so in these so much tossed debates, vvhhereby the most part of this backsliden and light generation, at best only seeking therein the gratifications of their own curiosity, are many times sadly stumbled unto greater irreligion; he will easily discern and lay hold upon the will and way of the Lord, being convinced that the meanest of his matters are not of a lower appearance, then of a high and in estimable tendencie.

To such therefore it is that I recommend and submit the ensuing disquisition; (if the unconcerned world do laugh, if the foolish mock, & the wicked rage, yet, I hope, my work is with my God, & its fruit shall be to all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity) being moved by the excessive silence of the one, & the immoderate boasting of the other of the two parties engaged in this affaire, to interpose for truth thus unequally treated, that by this poor essay it may be, in some measure, vindicat, and a check given to the pride and swelling words of the Adversaries, is all my aime. As for these of our opposites who may finde themselves more nearly touched in the few sheets subjoynd, if they think me therein transported to any excess I do assure them, that it is from the ungrateful violence of their provocation, and not at all the choise of my own inclination: I acknowledge also, that there are other Papers emitted by them, then the two that I do particularly review and annexe, specially a long Letter supposed to be. G. B's. and written by way of amplification of the former: But seeing I do fully discusse his Text, & after trial discover that his excellent & noble friend's gold, as he speaks, is but drosse, I hope he will easily pardone my not prosecuting a further fruitless search into what he calls his own ore. And thus I dismiss my Reader unto the perusal of vvhath folloves.

### R E A D E R,

*Before thou read be pleased to correct with a pen these Errata.*

P. Ag. 18. Lin. 29. read, probabilities. p. 19. l. 13. r. its. p. 21. l. 29. r. Rule. p. 23. l. 15. r. an. p. 24. l. 13. r. preach. p. 28. l. 27. r. ordination. p. 29. l. 17. r. the. p. 52. l. 2. what. r. with. p. 55. l. 17. with. r. which. p. 68. l. 31. r. revolutions. p. 68. l. 35. this, r. his. p. 72. l. 30. r. cuffed. p. 73. l. 30. expressed, r. expelled. p. 74. l. 25. was; r. were. p. 79. l. 29. r. wisdom. p. 88. l. 6. preserve. r. preferre. p. 92. l. 18. he. r. the. ibid. l. 28. Masters r. Majestie. p. 106. l. 23. your, r. their. p. 109. l. 18. r. change. ibid. l. 29. r. enjoyed. p. 114. l. 13. r. piece. p. 115. l. 23. pretended, r. perpended. p. 118. l. 18. r. distinct.

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Case of the  
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To the  
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The ancient *Prostasia*, or *Episcopus Preses* is considered, and the  
*Solemn League and Covenant* occasionally vindicat.



Such have been the high and stiff oppositions, and no less contrary and important consequences of Prelacie and Presbyterie within this Church, that as their Accommodation may be very desireable to all our temporizing pursuers of peace; so certainly it doth no less challenge the sincere and strict search of all the followers of Truth. Upon which consideration, having been induced to a more particular notice of the rise, procedure and issue of this affair, I am resolved, for the impartial vindication of the Lords ordinance of Government in his House, and our engagements thereto; and in the conscience of that known precept, *πάντα διαμαρτυρεῖν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ σέβειν*, to exhibit my observations upon it, with the calmeness and candor suitable to such an inquire. And therefore, omitting to preface any thing upon the first proposal of this Treatie, and the methods of its prosecution that have since been practised, I shall take its termes from their most assured  
A warrant,

warrant, viz. the Articles lately given in at *Tassey*, to the Ministers there convening, under the title, and of the tenor following,

*Articles proposed by the Bishop of Glasgow to the  
dissenting Brethren.*

1. **T**hat if the dissenting Brethren will come to Presbyteries and Synods, they shall not only not be obliged to renounce their own private opinion anent Church-government, and swear or subscribe anything thereto; But shall have libertie, at their entrie to the said meeting, to declare and enter it in what form they please.
2. That all Church affairs shall be managed, in Presbyteries or Synods, by the free vote of Presbyters, or the major part of them.
3. If any difference fall out, in the Diocesan Synods, betwixt any of the Members thereof, it shall be lawfull to appeal to a Provincial Synod, or their Committy.
4. That Intrants being lawfully presented by the Patron, and duely tryed by the Presbyterie; there shall be a day agreed on by the Bishop and Presbyterie, for their meeting together for their solemn ordination and admission: at which there shall be one appointed to preach; and that it shall be at the Parish Church, where he is to be admitted; except in the case of impossibility, or extream inconvenience: And if any difference fall in, touching that affair, it shall be referable to the Provincial Synods, or their Committy: as any other matter.
5. It is not to be doubted, but my L. Commissioner his Grace will make good what he offered, anent the establishment of Presbyteries and Synods: and we trust his Grace will procure such security to these Brethren for declaring their judgement, that they may do it without any hazard, in contraveining any Law: and that the Bishop shall humbly and earnestly recommend this to his Grace.
6. That no Intrans shall be engaged to any Canonical Oath or Subscription to the Bishop; and that his opinion, anent that Government, shall not prejudice him in this: but that it shall be free for him to declare.

These

These being the conditions offered, in order to the intended *Accommodation*, it is evident, that for a due understanding of their import, we ought first to know what is the nature of these Meetings called Presbyteries, Synods, and Provincial Assemblies, to which the Brethren are invited: And for that end, we must not only transpose the fifth Article to the first place, and supplie it with such other probabilities as may be had; but also arise a little higher, to remember the changes that we have lately seen; and *from what*, and *to what* they have carried us: For, seing our joyning in the present Presbyteries and Synods, with, or under Bishops, as they are offered to be reduced, is that which is principally demanded of us, it is so little possible, without this previous examination, rightly and fairly to define the case in contraversion, that I can hardly acquit the preposterousness and deficiencie in the Articles, of a greater error then a common mistake.

The thing then which comes first to be noted in point of fact, and which I shall represent with that truth and impartiality, that I hope none shall deny it, is, that this Church, having in the Year 1638. abrogat and abjured the Government of the Kirk by Bishops, and set up Presbyterian Government in its purest simplicity and paritie, we together with the renewing of the National Covenant, solemnly engaged, *Constantly to adhere unto, and defend the true Religion then established, in Doctrine, Worship and Government, contrary to all the novations and corruptions from which it was at that time reformed; and to labour by all means, for the purity and liberty of the Gospel, as it was established and professed before these novations.* After which time the Church, in our acknowledgement, did enjoy a Ministrie and Government truely Ecclesiastick, committed to them by, and depending upon our Lord Jesus Christ alone, as King in Zion, and Head of his Church. Thereafter, by an Act Rescissorie, it was declared and statute, by both King and Parliament, in the Year 1640. and 1641. agreeably to the Oath formerly taken, that the sole and only power and jurisdiction within this Kirk, did stand in the Kirk of God as it was then reformed; and in the General, Provincial and Presbyterial Assemblies, with

the Kirk Sessions established by *Act* P. 1592. & in like manner, by the *Solemn League and Covenant*, entred into in the Year 1643. the whole Kingdome doth again swear to the preservation of the Reformed Religion of the Church of *Scotland*, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government; and to extirpate Popery, Prelacie, Schism, Superstition, Profaness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound Doctrine, and the Power of Godliness: Which engagement, we are bound *all the dayes of our life zealously and constantly to continow in, against all opposition; and to promote the same, according to our power.* Thus matters stood, both in obligation and general observance, until the Year 1661.

At which time, the Parliament then sitting, having prepared their way by exalting of the prerogative, in opposition to, and for the overthrow of the practices of bygone times, specially that of entering into Leagues and Bonds; they at one blow rescinde all Parliaments after the year 1633. and the Government of the Church, being thereby wholly deprived of the civill sanction, and its continowance, by another *Act*, permitted and declared to be only precarious, during the Kings pleasure: Afterward, all Ecclesiastick meetings in Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions, are, by proclamation the 9 January 1662. discharged, untill they should be authorized and ordered by the Archbishops and Bishops then nominat by his Majestie, upon their entering into the Government of their respective Sees. By which means, the former Government being overturned and razed unto the very foundation, at least as much as the wit and power of man could effectuat, the next thing that offers, is the new structure and frame that is raised in its place: And in the year 1662. the Parliament again meeting, by their first *Act* for re-establishing of the Government of the Church by Bishops, laying it for the ground, *That the disposal of the external Government of the Church doth properly belong unto His Majestie, as an inherent right of the Crown, by vertue of his Supremacie,* They do thereby redintegrat the estate of Bishops, not only to their places in Parliament, and their accustomed dignities and priviledges; but also to their Episcopall function, Presidency in the Church, and



and power of Ordination, Censures and all Church-discipline to be performed by them, with the advice of such of the Clergie as they should find to be of known loyalty and prudence. And, for removing of all scruples, the Parliament doth furdur rescinde all former *Acts*, by which the sole and only power and jurisdiction within this Church, doth stand in the Church, and its Assemblies, and all other *Acts* whatsoever, giving any Church-power, Jurisdiction or Government to its Office-bearers or Meetings, other then that which acknowledgeth a dependance upon, and subordination unto the Sovereigne Power of the King as Supreme; and which is to be regulated and authorized, in the exercise thereof, by the Bishops and Archbishops, who are to be accountable to his Majesty for ther administration: And moreover, by the same *Act*, the *Act* 1592. (whereby Presbyterian Government was anciently confirmed, and which, by vertew of the above mentioned *Act* Rescissory, did now in so far, by the *Act* 1612. stand rescinded) in respect that it doth also limite the Kings prerogative to be without prejudice or derogation to the priviledge that God hath given to the Spiritual Office-bearers in the Kirk, concerning heads of Religion, Heresie, Excommunication, Collation, or Deprivation of Ministers, or any such like Censure, specially grounded in the Word of God. This *Act*, I say, 1592. is now for this reason totally annulled, in all the heads, articles and clauses thereof: from which *Act* of Restitution, although the nature of our present Church-constitution may be very obviously gathered; yet there are two other also, to the same purpose, of which I cannot but take notice. The one is that concerning a National Synod, wherein his Majesty, by vertew of his Supremacy, doth more absolutely appoint and determine upon the manner and members thereof, then if it were a meer civill Court, unquestionably dependent upon his Royal Authority; reserving to himselfe, aswell the proposall, as the final approbation of all matters to be therein treated. The other is the late *Act* 1669. asserting the Supremacie, whereby the Supreme Authority over all persons, & in all causes Ecclesiastick, is so fully declared to appertaine to the King, and

that by vertew thereof, he may dispose upon the Government and Persons Ecclesiastick; and enact concerning the Churches meetings and matters therein to be proposed, as he shall think fit, that a more absolute power in any thing can hardly be devised in his favours.

These *Act*s lying so well together, I could not but lay them forth to a joint consideration. And from them, I suppose, it will be very evident, that the work of the last revolution, was not only an invasion made upon the Churches Government, by the setting up of Bishops, and their usurpation over Presbyteries and Synods, as hapened in their former introduction, preceeding the year 1612: But that the alteration made, is plainly fundamental: and that, by his Majesties assuming all Church-power to himself, as the proper right and prerogative of the Crown, without so much as pretending, with the Pope, a Commission from Jesus Christ for this effect; and conveying the same by these communications alone, which he is pleased to dispense; and to such persons and meetings as he thinketh good to appoint, and maketh to himself accountable; there is not so much as that *Genus* of Ecclesiastick Government recognosced by Presbytery, as only fountained in, and derived from our Lord as Head of the Church; let be its specification from our Classial form, at present to be found in being in this Church.

But it may be said, that I seem to make a difference betwixt the former and the latter erection of Episcopal Government in this Church; and yet when Bishops were brought in, in the year 1606. the Kings prerogative was, by the then Parliament, first enacted, and by the next *Act*, their restitution is thereon also founded; and in like manner, by the *Act* 1612. Presbyteries and Synods are turned to exercises of the Brethren, and Diocesian visitations; and the power of ordination, deposition, and excommunication is given to the Bishop: and to compleat all, by the same *Act*, the *Act* 1592. was also rescinded: So that it appeares, that betwixt the former practices, and the late establishment, there is no great disparitie. 'Tis answered, the apparent resemblance of the things  
ob.



objected, is nevertheless accompanied by such real and material differences, that it doth only the more notable evince the strangeness of the methods, and nature of the present establishment, beyond all that the same designs in former times could suggest. King *James* was indeed bent for Prelacie, as all do acknowledge; but by seeking thereby to qualifie and oversway the Government of the Church, in effect to subvert all Government, given by our Lord unto his Church, is an absurditie which his better understanding did prudently forbear; and nothing, save either the myserie of this growing iniquity, or the precipitancie of our times could have produced.

Now that this is the true state of the difference betwixt our, and the former times, the particulars following will easiely evince. And *first*, it is true, the Parliament 1606. doth, by their first Act, declare the Kings prerogative, but only upon the narrative of the accession of the Crowns of *England* and *Ireland*, and in general, over all estates, persons, and causes, without the least derogation to the explication made in favours of the Church by the Parl. 1592. Whereas, in our dayes, this Supremacy hath been asserted, declared and exercised, in order to Ecclesiastick Persons, meetings and matters, not only far beyond any thing pretended to in civils; but above all that ever was arrogate, either by Pope, or temporal Potentate. *Next*, by the second Act of the fore-mentioned Parliament 1606. the Estate of Bishops is indeed restored; and that upon the ground of the Kings prerogative: but to what? To ecclesiastick power, presidencie, jurisdiction, &c. Fye! Not at all; but only to their former honours, dignities, prerogatives, priviledges, livings, lands, teinds, rents, &c. And chiefly and especially against the Act of annexation. 1587. These, though unjustly bestowed, were yet proper subjects for a King and Parliament: as for other things, purely ecclesiastick, they rightly judged them to be without their line: Whereas, by the late Act. 1662. the King, with consent of the Estates, restores the Bishops, both to the same things, and also to the exercise of their Episcopal function, presidency, power of ordination, and others above rehearsed: declaring

claring himselfe to be the proper and supreme Head ; whence all Church-pow'r doth flow , and to whom the Bishops ought to be accountable: An attempt so impertinent to secular Powers , and subversive of the very subject matter of Ecclesiastick government ; that the former times , not from any greater tenderness in these things , but meerly from a clearer knowledge of their inconsistency , did not once dream of : and therefore , in the third place , King *James* , who knew well enough , that neither did his prerogative extend to the proper power and jurisdiction of the Church , nor could this be thereupon founded ; and that for him to assume the disposal and dispensing thereof , was in effect to destroy it ; although by vertue of his Supremacy , he restored the Bishops to their honours , temporalities and possessions ; yet , as to the power Ecclesiastick by them acclaimed , he applyed himself to compass the same only by the suffrage & determination of Church-assemblies : and accordingly we see the *Act* , *Parliament* , 1612. giving unto Bishops their Church-pow'r and jurisdiction , not to be founded in , nor flow from the Supremacy ; but to proceed simply , by way of ratification of an Act of a General assembly , made two years preceeding ; and by the same *Act* . 1612. The *Act* 1592. establishing aswel the Protestant Religion , as Presbyterian government , and also limiting the prerogative , as I have said , is only rescinded , in so far as the same is derogatorie to the Articles then concluded : whereas , the King , with consent of Parliament , by the *Act* 1662. laying down the Supremacy for the basis , and ascribing to himself the origen of Ecclesiastick power , restores the Bishops , in the same manner , as if they were his own Commissioners and Delegates . And to the effect the Supremacy may transcend all , the *Act* 1592. is totally rescinded , without so much as a reserve for the Protestant Religion ; as is above declared . *Fourthly* , in former times , whatever were the errors and wrongs , either of Church , or State , or both , in the bringing in of Bishops ; yet this is very certain and important , that the Church-assemblies , at first , convey'd by warrand of the Churches intrinsick power , and after , confirmed by the Parliament

1592. were not upon the change discontinued; but honest men did therein maintain both their right and possession, except in so far as the same were invaded, and they hindered by the Bishops their prevalencie: whereas of late, not only were the former Presbyteries and Synods raised & dissolved, but the new meetings, now convened in their place, were appointed to sit down, as they should be authorized & ordered by the Bishops and Archbishops; who thereafter, are, by *Act* of Parliament, restored and impowered by the King, as supreme, over Persons and Causes Ecclesiastick, and declared Arbiters by right of his Crown in these matters: So that it is evident, that they both are called in his name, and do sit and act, by vertue of a power, acknowledging a subordination unto, and dependence upon his Sovereignty; by reason whereof, they are also to him made accountable. I grant, that for better concealing the mysterie of this Supremacie & Prelacie, the present meetings were set up, for the most part, in the same bounds, & much under the same forme and name with the old presbyteries and synods: But seeing their precarious dependence on Bishops, with the Bishops their proper & absolute subordination to the King, as Supreme over the Church, is undeniable from the above cited *Act*. 1662. that therefore the present Church-government, as it is frequently called in the late *Acts* of Parliament, so *de facto*, is his Majesties government, and not that of our Lord Jesus, who hath not invested him therewith, either by deputation or surrender, is evident above exception. Neither are these things so, only in the law and appointment, as is by some alledged; no, the frequent examples of Bishops, their deposing and suspending in Synods, after having asked, meerly *pro forma*, the advice of a few next to them, without the vote of the whole; their renversing the deeds of Presbyteries, & controlling whole Synods by themselves alone, with his Majesties granting of the High Commission, impowering Seculars to appoint Ministers to be censured by deposition and suspension, as well as Ecclesiasticks to punish by fining, confining & imprisoning; his removing and placing Bishops at his pleasure; and his late granting

a Commission of oversight or episcopacie, for the Diocesse of *Glasgow*, to him who mostly scrupled at a Patent of the Bishoprick, because of its temporalitie: These examples, I say, do clearly bring up our practice the full length of all enacted.

Having thus explained the condition of our present Ecclesiastick constitution, in its authority, principles and practices, wholly different from any model that ever was seen in this Church, I think, were it not for the clearness of method, I might leave the description of the present Presbyteries and Synods, to the Readers own ingenuous collection: but to render my discourse the more easie, I say, that the Presbyteries and Synods, which are now so termed amongst us, are meetings for Church-matters, convened by his Majesties call, acting by his authority, in a precarious dependence upon the Bishops, and absolute subordination to the Supremacie: and this definition, is so manifestly the result of what is premised and composed as it were of the *Act of restitution*, and supremacy, and proclamation so often mentioned, that none can deny it. Neither is it the present question, whether we may simply joine in these meetings or not? For seeing, that not only this conjunction would be an acknowledgement of the supremacie, nothing different from, yea rather worse then the sitting in the High Commission, and an active submission to, and owning of Prelacie in its highest usurpation; But even the Articles of Accommodation, by offering a mitigation, do evidently suppose it to be inconsistent with Presbyterian principles: It is clear, that a simple unqualified Union, with and in these meetings, is not the case of the present debate.

The point therefore that comes next to be examined, is, whether or not the Articles do indeed contain such condescensions and conditions, as may fully releive us of our just exceptions? Which leads me to take notice of the Fifth Article (as I said before) in the first place, as that which appears to be most direct to this purpose: And the contents of it are; *'Tis not to be doubted, that my L. Commissioner his Grace will make good what he offered, ament the establishment of Presbyteries and Synods; and we trust, his Grace will procure*

*procure such security to these brethren for declaring their judgement, that they may do it without any hazard in contravenient any Law; and that the Bishops shall humbly and earnestly commend this to his Grace.* These are the termes of the Article, and for all that I have yet heard, I am not so doubtful of the Comissioner's performance, as I am still uncertain of what was offered: The Brethren, who conferred in the Abbey, told us, that Presbyteries were offered to be set up, as before the Year 1638. and that the Bishop should passe from his Negative voice, and so forth: But what may be the import of the first part of this offer, or how far it may conduce to the clearing of our Consciences, I confesse I am still in the dark. That which the dissenting Brethren do, and every true Minister of Jesus Christ ought to seek after, is a Court, meeting in the Name, and acting by the authority and rules of our Lord and Master: Any other Court called by the King, and acting by an authority derived from the Supremacie, If in matters properly *Ecclesiastick*, is but a complexed usurpation against Christ, whose the Government is, both in the Constituent and actors: If in *Civills*, then it is wholly without the Ministers Sphere, and not to be medled in by them. Now that before the 1638. the Presbyteries and Synods then sitting, were, for the most part, our Lords Courts, in so far as they were by Succession the same with these, which at first, by warrant of Power by him given to his Church, did set up in his Name, and were not depraved from his institution by the Bishops their usurpation, and the subsequent corruptions, is not doubted. But these being lately discharged and discontinued, & I am sure, not intended to be again set down, either according to the first warrant and rule, or as they were purged after the 1638. but plainly by vertew of the Supremacie, and in resemblance to that conjunction of Prelacie and Presbyterie, that was by Law established before the 1638. and consequently, both upon a wrong foundation, and in their most corrupt condition, I can not so much as apprehend, what ease to scrupling consciences can be herein designed. I have indeed heard it sometimes alledged, for the reason of our present withdrawing, and in that differing from the

practice of our Predecessours under the last Bishops, that the then Presbyteries and Synods did meet by warrant of Law, which now they want: But this reason, is in its termes so extrinseck to that which a true Minister of Jesus Christ ought mainly to regard, and in truth so groundless, the *Act* 1592. confirming the proper right of these meetings, being by the *Act* 1612. (though not totally, yet in so far as it was derogatorie to the Articles therein set down,) rescinded and made void, that I cannot but judge both scruple & solution offered, impertinent. If therefore there be true dealing intended, and any real respect to conscience in this matter, it is evident, that it is neither by the re-authorizing of abrogat and abjured corruptions, nor yet by any new devised frame, by vertew of, and depending upon the Supremacie, that we can be cleared: But the only proposal to any good purpose that can be made in this behalfe, should be of Synods and Presbyteries, founded upon our Lords warrand, and his Churches priviledge; and consequently to restore them, either as they were first allowed by the *Act* 1592. or which is all one, in the condition wherein they were dissolved in the Year 1661. with an abolition of all inconsistent Acts and practices.

But it may be said, if we be reponed to the same Estate wherein our Predecessours were, how can we prove disconforme in our practice? 'Tis answered, the dissolution and discontinuance of true Presbyteries with this new erection, first appointed to be authorized by the Archbishops and Bishops, and then settled upon the foot of the Supremacie, do so evidently difference the cases, according to what is already more fully declared, that this objection is of no moment. And if it be urged, that as a restitution repones against a discontinuance; so, if Presbyteries and Synods be really set up, it is but a peevish nicety to stick upon the formalitie how the same is done: the returne is easie, *viz.* that it is not questioned, but a full and fair restitution doth indeed repone; and therefore, if it would please his Majestie to restore the Church, to its meetings and Priviledges which it enjoyed in the Year 1661. the pretense of the Supremacie, for accomplishing the thing,



if not really made the foundation of the Churches power, contrary to the very nature and being of the right restored, would prove no long demurre. But as for the restitution offered, seeing it is not adjusted to our distresse, but expressly referreth to a juncture, which was in it self very corrupt, and needed reformation; and whereunto, if bottomed upon the Supremacy, and not continuing on the old foundation, the faithful men of these dayes, had doubtless never joyned; it is but ane emptie conceit, no wayes reaching the question in hand. From which ground, it is also evident, that as we have good reason to declare, that we might have continued in these judicatories, had they not been once raised and settled again upon a new basis; and that though a Bishop had come and obtruded himself upon us, we might have sit still, after a free protest given against his usurpation; so, G. B<sup>r</sup> endeavour, in a letter, supposed to be from him, perswading to this Accommodation, to represent this as a metaphysical nicety, of no more value, then the emptie difference of sitting still, though a Bishop come in, and of sitting down again when a Bishop is already there; and yet acknowledging, in the same passage, the *case* to be different, if the Court & constitution of the Judicatorie be not the same, doth manifestly bewray the Doctors grosse inadvertencie; & that the more to be regrated, that he is not affrayed to obtest us, as before God, to answer for our sticking at such a *punctilio*, when yet he himself, in a short but untrue supposition of the sameness of the former and present Episcopal courts, insinuateth a very obvious reason, rendering the difference very material and important.

To be plain therefore, seeing the Supremacy, as at present established, hath clearly everted and swallowed up all true Ecclesiastick-government; and the Presbyteries and Synods now bearing that name, are only its unwarrantable Conventicles; unless that these prevailing floods of this prerogative be abated, and the true establishments of the government of the Lords house discovered; I do not see where the desire of any to be innocent can rest, or how the Lords faithful servants can be satisfied, and comply with this part of the overture. I might here

adde, that seeing there may be in some cases just reason for withdrawing, aswel because of the quality of the members, as the nature of the constitution, the rectification of the latter can as little in our case as in any be respected as a full ground of satisfaction: but the defectiveness of thir Articles will more properly afterward come to be considered.

And therefore I shall novv go to the First, to see vvhat is thereby further offered: and here vve find it proposed, *That, if the dissenting brethren will come to Presbyteries and Synods, they shall not only not be obliged to renounce their own private opinion, anent Church-government, and swear and subscribe any thing thereto; but shall have libertie, at there entrie to the said meeting, to declare & enter it in what form they please.* If I were enclined to use sharpness, I might on just ground say, that this Article, certainly to be understood of entering to sit & act, & not only to protest & testifie, doth contain no better *Salvo* for our exceptions, then what, if admitted, will equally allow the same access to the Pope's Conclave, or any other the most unwarrantable and corrupt meeting upon earth; is as evident, as that a Jesuitick reservation of opinion, and declaration without any effect, or a protestation contrarie to fact, is thereby judged a sufficient exoneration. But to come to the purpose closely, I affirme that the Synods and Presbyteries, here invited to, are not truly such, but meerly nominal and pretended: being in effect Courts authorized by Bishops, and subordinat to his Majestie in matters purely Ecclesiastick, over and about which he himself hath no such power. And for the former part of the assertion, the Acts & other things by me premised do abundantly clear it. As for the latter, that the King hath no such power in and over the Church; it being uncontroverted in the Presbyterian perswasion, and the Supremacy, made the ground of the abovementioned *Act of Restitution*, being to them a greater cause of offence, then any of these difficulties in this matter of conjunction with Presbyteries & Synods intended by the *Accommodation*; it was the part of the *Accommodators*, either by conviction or condescendence, to have removed it. However I may not digresse; only I am assured, if these three things be considered



sidered, which I am readie to demonstrat against whatsoever Opponent; (1.) That this Ecclesiastick power is the sole prerogative of Jesus Christ, whereof the administration was committed by our Lord to his Church, when no Magistrat was a Member thereof; and that upon the Magistrates becoming Christian, there is no ground adduceable whereupon it could accrease to him: (2.) That all the power of the Magistrat is, under God, from the People, and in such things over and about which the original power was to them competent, to which this Church-power can in no sort be reckoned. (3.) That all the extraordinarie interpositions of good Kings and Emperours, in matters of Religion, did no wayes flow from any inherent right or prerogative they had conversant in these matters; but were the pure product of necessity, sustained by the righteousness of the work, & deficiency of the more proper means. These things, I say, being duely considered, I am very confident, that all the pretensions of the Supremacy, will very quickly evanish: and therefore it inevitably followes, that, seeing the Kings Supremacy is a high usurpation against our Lord & Master, all Courts depending thereon, and acknowledging the same, & partaking therein, what ever opinion a man do reserve, or whatever declaration be made anent it, must also be rejected.

But here there ariseth a great noise and clamor, what! are the present Presbyteries and Synods no Presbyteries and Synods? then are the present Ministers no Presbyters? But their is no such haste; neither have these things any further connexion, then that the present Ministers are not Presbyters, in so far as the same denotes a power of ruling committed by Jesus Christ, which truly I think in ingenuitie they can not deny; specially seing, that although they hold themselves to be Ministers by mission from Christ; yet they do nevertheless acknowledge their power of Ecclesiastick Government and Jurisdiction to be from the King, on whom they grant that the Ministerie, as to other things, doth not in such a manner depend: Whereupon it evidently followeth, that if the power of government, do as well and in the same manner flow from Jesus Christ, as the power of order (as the Schools speak)

speak) doth; and that thereby true Presbyteries and Synods do only subsist; then, these meetings, which recognise his Majesty as Supreme for and in the exercise of the power which they acclaim, can no more be truly such, then he who, by vertue of his Sovereign's mission, would pretend himself to be a Minister. But what need of more words; if the present conform Ministers, and there meetings, have disclaimed Jesus Christ for their immediate Head, in matter of Government, and owne no power thereof, but what acknowledgeth a dependence upon, and subordination to his Majesty as Supreme; wherewith nevertheless he himself is not at all vested; and if on the other hand, we do disallow all Church-Government, and medlings and meetings thereof, which do not hold their commission and warrant from Christ alone, as the Head of the Body; what concurrence can we make, in on and the same Assembly? Or by what *salvo* may my sitting and acting be justified in a meeting, in the power whereof I hold it unlawful to partake? For my part, since, in the matter of Ecclesiastick Government, they do not hold the true Head, but have betaken themselves to another, to whom they do referr, & are accountable for all their power; if we, who in Conscience do both detest this usurpation, and disclaime all share in any power, save what our Lord hath committed unto us, desire to be excused from these Assemblies; I think, until they first convince us of our mistake in these things, they cannot rationally blame us for Separation. And therefore, what ever may be the effect of an entrie, qualified either by declaration or protestation, in order to the freeing of the partie from an apparent constructive accession, to certain accidental corruptions that may be in a meeting, to which he is otherwise obliged to joine; yet sure I am, in this case, where the very constitution it self is so unwarrantable and corrupt, that non can actively partake therein, without sin; this remedie here offered is altogether insignificant.

The next thing that here occurs, is, that although this reservation of opinion and declaration permitted, could be a *salvo*, as to the evils of the constitution; yet, without doubt, there is a conside-

consideration to be had, in such conjunctions, of the persons also with whom it is to be made. There may be an Assembly, nay a Presbyterie or Synod of evill doers, which we are bound to hate; and even the Assembly of the wicked who inclosed him, and pearced his hands and his feet, wanted not a specious name; yea it was the house of his friends: sure no man will think that a simple protestation may warrant constant presence in these cases; but rather encline, with *Jeremiah*, to leave and to draw from an assembly of treacherous men. What for assemblies the present Church-meetings are, I can be no more tender, then it is superfluous to utter: only this I will say, that if it be once granted, that such may be the condition of a meeting, by reason of the quality of its members, that no declaration can warrant any fellowship therein; I am certain that the subsumption, *viz.* that such are the Courts to which we are invited, may be, to the satisfaction of all unbyassed men, upon these sufficient grounds of notorious perjury, intrusion, profanitie and insufficiencie, unquestionably made out.

But I proceed to the next Article, bearing, *That all Church-affaires shall be managed, in Presbyteries and Synods, by the free vote of Presbyters, or the Major part of them.* This is indeed the main & principal condescendence: and it is to this place, that, as well for the satisfaction of such Brethren as possibly will not so easily, at first, admit of the foregoing reasons, as for a full answer to all that can be said for this *Accommodation*, I have reserved to discourse upon it at more length, and on all fair and probable Suppositions. In supplement therefore of this Article, and to take it in the most advantageous sense that the Proposers can desire, I adde, that consistently therewith, it seems the Bishop is to be reduced to a constant Moderator: whence in prosecution of my declared purpose, waving any further exceptions against the nullity of the present Presbyteries and Synods, I clearly state the Question thus. Whether a constant Moderator, or fixed *Trooslos*, for terme of life, in Church-meetings, be a thing in it self lawful? And how far it is by us admissible? And what compliance we may have for it?

And because there are some papers gone abroad from the Bishop of *Glasgow*, as is supposed, upon this subject, and that the current of the speeches at *Tafely* wereof the same strain; I conceive, for rendering of the debate more certain, it will not be amisse, that I bring them to a particular and exact review.

And in the beginning of these Papers, we find it asserted, *That Episcopal Government, managed in conjunction with Presbyters in Presbyteries and Synods, is not contrary either to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive Church; but agreeable to both.* That this position doth hold forth no more then the lawfulness of an *Episcopus Praeses*, & that upon negative grounds, giving the asserter the easier part of defence, is obvious to the first observation. To have affirmed an obligation to this model, though the Author's choise had not been convenient: *the thing which hath been, it is that which shall be*, and an agreeableness to Scripture and antiquitie, is for the time a very colourable pretension, and all that the Author dare adventure to affirme: But that as much may be said for a Presbyterian paritie, exclusive of this presidencie; I think our adversaries themselves will not deny: And it is very evident, that it is the thing they have no inclination to redargue. Which advantage, lying equally and fairly on our side, and being confirmed by possession strengthened by an Oath, and to the present conviction of all (mostly arising from the contrary effects of Episcopacie) sealed with the seal of good Gospel fruits, one of the great evidences produced by *Paul* for his Apostelship; how much it doth impugn the late change, and justifie the aversion and non-compliance of all good men therewith; all rational men may discern. But, seeing our cause is not as theirs, leaning only to negative probabilities, and the power wherewith it is supported, to deal clearly in this matter, though we do not pretend to a positive, expresse, and particular Scripture-precept, as well against the presidencie, as for the parity pleaded; yet, that we have an equivalent divine warrant, more pregnant then what in other particulars is acknowledged for such, even by our Opposites: The following heads do plainly evince.

And

And *first*, That Jesus Christ King in Zion, sitting and ruling upon His Throne, to whom all Power is given, and who is the Head of the Body, when He ascended on high, sent forth His Apostles to gather, feed, and rule His Church, promising to be with them to the end of the World; and thereby hath appointed a Government in His house, suitable to these holy ends for which it is designed, is not more evidently founded upon the Scripture-grounds insinuat, then firme in its connexion and inference.

2. As the Apostles and their Successors were the only perpetual Pastors ordained by our Lord; (for as for the mission of the *Seventy*, what ever allusions after Ages, according to their then model, did draw from it, without all peradventure, according to its own tenour, it did expire before our Lords suffering) so they were by him constitute in an exact paritie, as Brethren: and because of this equality, and the nature of their Ministrie, our Lord forbids among them all distinction of authoritative Superioritie, the very name of *Rabbi* and *Master* then abused, and all ambition & affectation of these or any other elating dignities and titles; but they are only commanded to outstrip and exceed on another, in that diligence and humilitie recommended to them in that common service, whereunto they were destined.

3. According to this command given, so they conversed and behaved in the Church of God, without the least vestige of imparity, either in power or presidencie: Nay on the contrary, with a manifest equality, except it be in some notes of apparent preheminnence in these, by men esteemed inferior, expressly, as it seems recorded, to counter-balance the vanity of ambition of after Ages, who in favour of others, might imagine a Superiority. And such are the principal resort made to *James*, his moderating rather than *Peters* in the meeting at *Jerusalem*, *Pauls* resistance to *Peter*, and the right hand of fellowship given to him by *James*, *Cephas* and *John*, and the like.

4. The pastors appointed by the Appostles being their successors, both in their ordinarie power and blessing, whatever might be the inequality betwixt them and the Appostles, either from

the immediacy and extent of the Apostles their mission, their infallible assistance and greater eminency of gifts, or by reason that the Apostles were the Lords chosen witnesses, and authors of conversion to most of them whom they ordained; yet, as to the perpetual and ordinary power given to, and transmitted by them in the Church, it is evident from Scripture, that, in that, they neither claimed nor exercised either superiority or presidency over other Ministers. Hence it is, that as they call and account them their brethren, partners, fellow-labourers, and themselves fellow-elders with them; so we finde, that what in one place *Paul* ascribes to the laying on of his own hands, in another he attributes to the laying on of the hands of the Presbyterie: And the same *Paul*, who was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, receiving a solemn mission from a Presbyterie, not consisting of Fellow-apostles, but of other Prophets and Teachers. Gifts therefore were indeed diverse and unequal, and imployments also were various in the dayes of the Apostles, according to the then exigence of a growing spreading Church: but that either among the Apostles themselves, or them and the Pastors by them ordained, or among the Pastors themselves there was the least imparity, in respect of that ordinarie and standing power continued in the Church, as the passages mentioned do plainly confirme the negative; so there can no instance be adduced from Scripture in the contrary.

We know *Timothie*, *Titus*, & the *Angels* of the Churches, are much talked of, as the first superior Bishops: and to this it is as easily reponed.

1. That there is nothing enjoined or recommended in *Pauls* Epistles to *Timothie*, which is not proper for every Pastor, unlesse what is evidently referable to his office of an Evangelist there expressed.

2. The command given to *Titus* to ordain Elders, was by way of expresse commission, and not in the least exclusive of the concurrence of other Elders where they might be found in the place.

3. That



3 That it is in these very Epistles, more then any where els in Scripture, that both the names of Bishops and Elders are promiscuously used, and the thing and office thereby signified held forth to be the same.

And lastly, that the known use & elegancie of the singular number for the plural, with the figurative speech and tenor of the seven Epistles in the *Revelation*, do no more allow the Angels, representing the Pastors, then the Stars signifying the same thing, nay or the Candlesticks the Churches, to be taken for single persons. But for further clearing of all these and like objections, I refer the Reader to the many Authors, by whom these things are more fully handled.

These grounds then being all undoubtedly Scriptural, with what confidence can it be demanded, where doth the Scripture hold out a paritie among Ministers? Or how can it be affirmed, that the *Episcopus Preses* contended for, specially with his necessary presence in Ordination, as we will afterwards hear, is not contrary, but agreeable to the word of God? By all which it appears, that as our Presbyterian paritie is plainly warranted, both by general Gospel-rules, and very expresse instances contained in Scripture; So the apparent lawfulness of any other form of mans devising, can be no justification thereof.

But it is objected, *If this ground be rejected, how will we maintain, or where will we finde an expresse command or rule for our own model of Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods Provincial and National, with a Commission of the Kirk, in their several dependencies and subordinations, and the changing of the moderator in these meetings, excepting that only of the Kirk-sessions, wherein the Minister doth constantly moderat; for without this expresse Kule, a Bishop or fixed President may very well consist with that frame, which we contena for: And it is really and actually so at this present in this Church?*

In answering this objection, I must begin with its latter part, which is so directly contradicted by the present constitution, both in its legal establishment, and known exercise, as I have already proven, that I marvel how it could escape any person of ordinary

understanding. As for the main thing objected, having from the Scripture asserted the warrant of our parity, its difficulty is easily satisfied: for seeing that by Divine institution the Church is erected into one Society, and officers in an equal parity for its oversight and Government thereto appointed; And seeing that in every concession, the things natural and proper to what is conceded must be understood to be therein imported; the libertie and power of common counsel, together with the subordination of the parts to the whole, do thence necessarily result. The premisses of which argument, being so consistently composed of Scripture and reason thereon dependent, I need not here enlarge in any explication. Sure I am, he who duely perpendeth these uncontrovertible Scripture-truths; That the Church is gathered into one body; that the Apostles together, the Pastors and Elders together are incharged with its oversight and rule; that the Spirit of the Prophets is subject unto the Prophets; and that where two or three are gathered together in the Lords Name, there he is in the midst of them; It is impossible he should remain doubtful of the Divine warrant and authority of our meetings. Conforme to which truths and principles, we not only finde, in the Acts of the Apostles, the Church governed by common counsel, but the same Meetings and Councils inspired and directed by that humilitie, love and harmonie, that no more then a chair man for the time, & no fixed moderator can therein be discerned. If these grounds were not both solidly and evidently conclusive of all necessarie for me to prove, I might easily, without either worming or straining (as our moderatists phrase it) adduce and make out from Scripture precedents more exactly correspondent to our formes: But seeing the right and Priviledge of common Counsel for Government, in order both to the whole and certain of the parts, is by Scripture-practise obviously held forth; its extension to all the parts, and their subordination to the whole, doth so naturally and necessarily follow, that I judge it superfluous to engage my self further into our adversaries scrupulous quibblings.

Now



Now, as for the *Commission of the Kirk*, whereof Scripture warrant is also required, seeing we do not hold it to be an ordinarie Church-judicatorie; but do only regard it as a delegation from the preceeding National-assembly elicited by extraordinary exigences, and precisely accountable to the next ensuing, its right is so certainly parallel to that of every Committee, appointed by any meeting for dispatch, that unlesse it were alledged, that this power of commissionating is by Scripture inhibited; it must of necessity be understood to be founded in the same warrant with the Assemblies, from which it doth flow & receive its confirmation. I contend not, but our observance in practice might have had its own failings in this point: but seeing the excessse in this matter, if any was, did probably flow from the mistake of a supposed expedience; the evidence of its warrant and right use, by such and error in fact, cannot at all be impugned.

But the ministers their being constantly moderators in Kirk-sessions, among the Elders joyned with them for Discipline, is that wick our adversaries do urge, as a great advantage for proving the lawfulness of the fixed Moderator in Presbyteries and Synods, and our inconsequence in denying the same. In the fond conceit of which argument, it hath been, and is so frequently by them inculcat, that here is a Presbyter, having a fixed presencie among presbyters, that I am sure it may justly nauseate or move to laughter any indifferent observer.

To begin therefore with this childish emphasis, taken from the terme Presbyter, and the calling of the minister and parochial-elders, both of them presbyters; such indeed they are: but seeing the scripture doth warrant the office of our Ruling Elder, & also attributeth severall other names to Ministers, agreeable to the main labour, and to these Parochial Elders, only that of Presbyters or Elders; and yet on the other hand, the classical Assemblies, principally consisting of Ministers, are commonly called Presbyteries: If use, for distinction, hath appropriat to these Parochial-elders the name of Elders, rather than that of Presbyters, what folly is it to think, that a contrary usurpation of names can be of

any import; or wherefore do not our adversaries, if they have such a complaisance for these conceits, tell us further what a strange thing it is to see a Presbyterie (for so a Kirck-session may well be termed) consisting only of one Minister and all the rest Laiks, as they speak, and withal reflect upon these more pungent retorsions nearer Home, *viz.* that in their way, a Bishop pretends to a Superiority or presidencie over many Bishops, and a single Presbyter must have the preheminance over his Fellow-presbyters.

But leaving these fopperies, and taking words according to the determination of custome in such cases, in answer to what is material in the objection, I say (1.) That where there are two Ministers in a parish, they moderat in the Session by turnes. (2) Where the Session doth consist of one Minister, both a preaching and a ruling Elder, and the other Elders of the Congregation, who are but his helpers in discipline, his different quality, with the double honour allowed to him by the Apostle, doth abundantly determine the moderatorship in his favours. (3.) If a Minister, who is the Pastor and teacher of the whole flock, do preside amongst the Elders of a secondarie order, joined to him for his assistance; will it therefore follow, that one Minister should fixedly preside over many, in the same order with himself, and equally concerned in all the affaires of the meeting? What Logick can knit together such inferences?

Having thus demonstrat from Scripture-prcepts and practices, and firme rational conclusions thence deducted, the command of our parity, with the warrantableness of our Courts and all their gradations, I am very confident, that we do thereby fully satisfie all the obligation to bring a clear command for these judicatories and their subordinations, which our affirming them to be of unquestionable divine right, & institutions undoubtedly flowing from the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in his Church, and the only lawful government thereof, do lay upon us. As for what the author alledgeth against us, that we do affirme them to be the very Kingdom of Christ upon Earth, and the absolutely necessary, aswel as only lawful government of the Christian Church: what  
ever

ever tumor may appear in such expressions, over and above the account I have given of the matter, it is his own devising, on purpose contrived, that he may represent us as high talkers, above the asserters of other forms; and yet we not only know that the commenders of Episcopacie, as the only true ancient Apostolick government of the Church, do speak at as high a rate, to say no more; but that their acting in its behalfe doth indeed surpass all other measures, I am certain will easily be by all acknowledged, who consider how Presbyterie is the only butt against which their malice & persecution is levelled, and that into this malice, all the zeal they ought to have against poperie, profanitie, atheisme and irreligion seems to be converted; which stirring activity may also in this same Author, who; being in his Ministrie rather a recluse monastick, is for its sake become a very busie Prelate, most obviously be instanced.

Now, as by the grounds which I have adduced for our Presbyterian patitie, the contrary repugnancy to Scripture rules of a fixed presidencie is sufficiently held out; so I would gladly know, from what shadow of probabilitie the Scripture agreeablenesse thereof is by our Author asserted. For my part, unlesse it be in the instance of a *φρασεωσις* *Diatriphas*, I know not where the least vestige of it is to be found. And therefore I say in the next place, in opposition to the second point affirmed, viz. the non-contrariety and agreeablenesse of this *Episcopatus preses* to the example of the primitive Church, that though, in the second and third Centuries of the Church, this *Proslafsa* could be more evidently discovered; yet, seeing the better pattern of the more pure and ancient times do hold out no such thing, but an equal paritie among the Elders or Overseers (Bishops) of the Church of God, levelled by humilitie, and ordered by love and concord; and that this Presidencie did, in its tendencie and progresse, become the rise not only of aspiring Prelacie, but of the monstrous Papacy, it is evident that it is a meer humane invention, equally unwarrantable and dangerous. And here I might show how little

light we have, even in the acknowledgment of some of our Adversaries, from History, or any other pure and credible Record of the Churches constitution in the Centuries mentioned; and that the more near to the dayes of the Apostles, and more uncorrupted any such testimony is found, as that of *Clemens* and *Irenæus*, (for as for *Ignatius* Epistles, even these of them that are of the best repute, I am sure no impartial Reader, who considers either the worth of the person, or the simplicitie of the times, or the stile suitable to both, will judge them to be from such an Author) the more they homologat with Scripture in the Synonomie of Bishop and Presbyter, and the samenesse of the office thereby signified: And I might also make it appear, how that for all the alteration and advance made towards Prelacie in the succeeding Centuries; yet the Fathers in these times, chiefly *Jerom*, did affirme the same truth of the Apostolick times, and the Age immediatly succeeding: But as I am too well perswaded, that pride was the first and most subtile and active corruption that did invade the Church; so I can very easily grant that a *Protocathedria* was thereby very early either occasioned, or usurped: and therefore omitting to insist, how that partly by designe of the ambitious, partly by mistake against the factious it seemeth to have been introduced, I shall rather endeavour, by a few observes, so to discover the evill of its rise, and its worse tendencies, that in this above all, all men may perceive the perinciousness of humane inventions, how specious soever, when superadded to Gospel truth and simplicitie.

And first I say, that the alledgeance made for this *protesta*, as conducing much to order and the cure of divisions, in so far as it respects its fixednesse is a vaine & emptie pretense: for, seeing this fixednesse as such importeth no more then the suspending of the more certain change of an annual or other termly election, unto that more uncertain one of term of life, and that sometimes this latter may notwithstanding happen to be more frequent then the former, it is obvious to any mans calme and serious reflection, that it is meerly to the presidencie, and not at all to this contro-

troverted qualitie in itself considered, that the advantages commended can be ascribed: And therefore as it is certain, that, the concerne of order being once duely provided for by a sutable moderation, the more obnoxious the person moderating is to the suffrage of the Society, the lesse hazard of an ensuing abuse or usurpation; So it is very evident, that this superfluous fixedness, importing a certain degree of exemption, could only in the end prove a foment of pride and gratification of ambition, as the event it self to plainly verifies: of which if any man do yet doubt, let him consider *Romes* Papacy, that under this pretense, fortified by *Jerom's* testimony, *Cuncti (nempe Apostoli) claves regni celorum accipiunt, tamen inter duodecem unus eligitur, ut capite constituto schismatis tollatur occasio*, did not only arrogate to it self the Primacie, butro this day doth thereby vail its Tyrannie. I grant that power is a soveraign antidot against contentions and divisions: But if we measure it out by our own wisdom, with a regard only to this exigence, neither respecting the Lords warrant, nor the sufficiencie of gifts and countenance of his blessing, it is very manifest that this rule may quickly lead us to surmount the Papacie and its implicite faith; and never suffer us to cease, until, by an absolute subjection, both Truth & Conscience be swallowed up of ignorance and stupidity. Let us therefore above all things in the matters of God study his own way: if we neglect this sure and excellent ordinance of a self-denyed and lowly Gospel ministrie, with these prescriptions of truth, humilitie and love, given to us as the remedies against all disorder, schisme and heresie, and indulge to our own devices, where wil we subsist? I need not represent the subtilty and presumption of mens delusions, specially for promoting that mysterie of iniquitie that worketh in Ecclesiastick aspirings: If our blind probabilities were sufficient to authorize the means of peace and order; there is no question, carnal reason would again insinuat, according to the pretensions that raised the Papacie, and the frequent suggestions of our times in behalfe of the Magistrat, that the proper and assured way to a firme establishment were to resolve either mans beleife, or his obedience into

the uncontrollable determinations either of the Pope, or of the Prince. But as the dispositions of the Sovereign and only wise God are not to be fathomed, let be regulat by our narrow and weak capacities; so ought we alwayes to revere these peremptorie and seuerer restraints, wherewith he hath bounded the darrings of vain reason, not so much as to think in these things above what is written; specially in the case in hand, when not only manifest disappointments, as to the ends pretended, but the worst of consequences have by a very visible progresse openly discovered both the folly and prejudice of this presidencie under question.

For evincing whereof I observe. 2. that as it is not unto this fixed presidencie as such, but unto the more abounding grace of God, under these frequent and grievous persecutions wherewith the Church was then exercised, that the singular order, unity and charity of the primitive times is to be ascribed; So the gradual advance of this *Prostasia*, together with the joint and perpetual declines of true knowledge & piety, & concurring increase of pride, contention, irreligion & superstition, are very pregnant evidences of its vanity. I need not note that the first times to which this presidencie can lay any claime were the purest, its first setting up, as most acknowledge, was in the second Centurie, in a simple *Protocathedra* to the Senior Presbyter: Shortly thereafter it turned to a *Prostasia* given by election; and then stil ascending, even under the discountenance and persecution of the Heathenish powers and people, it did notwithstanding, what by wresting the election in many places from the Presbyters, and what by usurping the power of ordination and censures, advance to a very high degree of Prelacie: as is abundantly confirmed by what may be gathered from the Records of these times, and especially by good *Cyprian* his words to his Presbyters *Epist. 6. A primordio Episcopatus mei, statui nihil sine consilio vestro privata sententia gerere*: whereby as it were in opposition to the then corrupt custome of other Bishops, he plainly insinuateth his contrary resolution. Now what, under this progresse of the *Prostasia*, still pretending to be a remedy, was the growth of the evils both of contentions, schis-



mes and heresies (specially in the intervals of the Churches sufferings, wherewith these several degrees were manifestly attended, needeth not to be enforced by many instances. That of *Victor* as to superstition, contention and schisme, who for a different observation of *Tasch* (a weighty point forsooth) did excommunicat the better halfe of the Christian world, may stand for a thousand: and as for Heresies, their catalogues are almost endlesse: But though its rise under so great pressures, doth very convincingly argue the strong and subtile Spirit working in its elevation; yet it was from the time of *Constantin's* Empire, and the rising of the Sun of prosperitie upon the Church, that it did yet more evidently begin to discover itself in its proper collours: And from this period indeed it was, that, more and more exalting and explicating its powers, it ceased not, until through proud and fervid contentions of the prelates amongst themselves for precedence (more dangerous by far then al the pettie contests that could arise among Presbyters) and these still varnished with he pretexts of unity, peace, and apostolick example, but really animat by pride and ambition, and accompanied with covetousness, luxurie, neglect of truth, abounding of errors, superstition and irreligion, it at length arrived at the papacie; which, by its tyrannous infallibility and implicit faith, did in the end indeed bring forth, in the destroying of true knowledge and conscience, an apparent peace and unity, most like to that indifferencie in the matters of religion, and surrender and abjection of conscience, which the abettors of our supremacie do, under the same plausible names and pretenses, so much endeavour to introduce. This being then the growth, progresse and product of this *Prossasia* & its lying pretense of remedying & preventing schism (in effect nothing els then the sutable revelation of that mysterie which at first did more latently begin to work under its lesse discernable appearances) what judgment is to be made of it, I leave to every mans ingenuity.

If it be objected, that although the ensuing of Prelacie and Papacie, and all their evils upon the ancient Episcopacy may give a colour to the premised discourse; yet it is easie in such matters

to strain observations; and these consequences may be only its accidental and not its proper effects. 'Tis answered, not to insist upon the natural and gradual connexion of the things represented, more easie to be discerned by impartial reflection, then perswaded by superfluous arguing, it is very observable, *First*, that the great, if not the sole reason, that from the beginning hath been or can be alledged for the fixed presidencie, *viz.* the care of divisions, and prevention of schisme, was that which in the righteous judgment of God, according to the deceivableness of unrighteousness, was still made use of for carrying on the Myserie of iniquitie, until that at length it appeared in its own colours, and discovered its effects, infinitely more pernicious then the evils which it pretended to obviat. 2, That in matters Religious, the want of Divine institution, and consequently of our Lords promise and blessing, together with the actual following of bad fruits & effects, are a sufficient demonstration, that the thing questioned is thereof properly productive. I need not observe, that it is upon this ground that the Popes Primacie and Headship is very justly charged with all *Romes* Superstitions and abominations: If of old, *I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this People*, was by the Spirit of the Lord made a sure and firme conclusion, shall not then the visible accomplishment, I appointed it not, and it hath not profited, but been attended with many grievous mischiefs, prove an evidence equally convincing?

But it is said, admitting that this was indeed the course of its exaltation in these times yet the proposal of it being now made with a manifestly contrary designe, and in effect to low and reduce Prelacie; the preceeding representation is of no moment. 'Tis answered, I grant that this reduction is indeed given out to be the design of the alteration offered: But seeing it is in the Supremacie, more then in the Papacie in itself considered, that the strength and complement of all corruption in Ecclesiastick Government, and the very end and design of Prelacie itself doth lye; and that the present offer of this Presidencie, is only a Politique draught, tending by the engaging of these who justly reclaim to sit & act

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in its Courts, to the more compendious and sure establishment of the same Supremacie, and rendering of its influences more effectual; it is evident that its project may possibly appear a more covert, but is in truth rather a more dangerous part of the same mysterie. If then this fixed *Præses*, at first set up in the Church, be a thing unwarrantable and anti-scriptural; that the *Episcopus Præses* offered to us must be much more such, cannot be controverted; in as much as there are several material differences betwixt the one and the other all aggravating against the present proposal, as this short comparison of the two doth abundantly hold out. The *Episcopus Præses* in ancient times was at least in the beginning chosen by the Presbyterie over which he presided, and consequently was by them censurable; as also he did only preside over one, and that oftentimes a very small *Classis*, the taking of the election from the Presbyters, the exempting the then *Episcopus Præses* from their controll, and the superinduction of Metropolitans and Arch-bishops being all posterior inventions. whereas the *Præses* proposed to us is to be nominat and appointed by his Majesty; and for any thing we know by him only deposable or removable: As also the least of them is to be over many Presbyteries or *Classes*, whereof any one is by far too large for a conscientious Gospel oversight, and two of them over several Synods, not to mention their extrinseck and absurd secularities, clearly incompatible both with the nature and work of their office. Which differences to be both certain and material, it were easie for me to make out: But since our rejecting of this *Propositio*, doth proceed upon far more solid and comprehensive grounds, I shall not urge them: Only, that I may a little recreate my Reader, the returne made at *Tasely* by a worthie Doctor, to that disparitie of the present *Præses* his being nominat by the King, is very observable; and after he had meenly declared the manners of old elections, and how the People sometime as well as the Presbyters had an interest therein, and having made his answer, that the Church did then appoint and choose this *Præses*, for want of a Christian Magistrat, with no better consequence then if one should alledge, that

that for the same reason the Church did then, and the Migistrat might now, ordain Ministers, he proceeded to prove the lawfulness of his Majesties appointment and nomination, partly from the prerogative of universal Patron, competent to him *jure corona*, and by *Act of Parliament*, and partly because that an inferior Patron by presenting a Minister to the Kirk of his presentation, doth thereby make him a *Proestor* over the parochial Elders. Was not this grave and judicious reasoning? But seeing the right of patronage is in it self a civil right (though indeed a sad incumbrance to the Church) only respecting the benefice, by vertue whereof the Patron conferreth no Ecclesiastick power, or any thing pertaining to the office, but, in that regard, referres the person presented intirely to the tryal of the Church, which alone admitts him to the function, and conveys to him any Ecclesiastick power thereto competent, I only wish the Doctor that reflection and sobrietie as may hereafter prevent such slegmatick mistakes.

The next argument against this fixed presidencie, and why we can not consent unto it, I take from the Oath of God that is upon us; not that I account these Covenants to be the main, if not the only, ground of Scrupling, as the Bishop alledgeth to be by many of us pretended: No, I am more perswaded, that there is nothing sworne to, or renounced by us, in these ingagements, which is not antecedently either duety or sin, then to be in love with their Arguments, who, from the determination that may arise from an oath in things within our power, do thence conclude against Episcopacie as in it self a thing indifferent, and by our oath only abjured. But seeing Covenant-breakers do now turne Covenant-interpreters, and it is the authors own undertaking to prove that a fixed presidencie is not contrary to this our oath, and seeing that the same oath doth indeed superadde a special obligation, as we shall afterwards hear, I shall first shew, that this *Episcopus preses* is by us abjured, and then review the authors observations in the contrary.

And as to the *first*, it is not from the *Solemn League and Covenant* that

that we do only or yet principally conclude in this matter, no he who remembereth what I said in the beginning concerning our Reformation in the year. 1638, and our renewing of the National Covenant, with the explication thereto subjoined, whereby, having found Presbyterian government with an equal paritie, to be the government appointed by the Lord in his House; and that the same was formerly established by Oath in this Land; and having then restored it, we bind our selves constantly to defend and adhere to the true Religion, as then reformed from the novations and corruptions that had been introduced; whereof the government of the Church by Bishops, and their constant Moderatorship were reputed to be a part; and to labour by all lawful means to recover the purity and liberty of the Gospel as it was professed before the forsaide novations: he, I say, who remembereth these things, will easily grant, that it is upon this Oath, that our chief obligation depends, and it is to it that we are to referre our ingagements by the League and Covenant, whereby we are bound to preserve the reformed Religion in the Church of Scotland, in Doctrine, Discipline, Worship and Government: so that the second Article of the *League*, binding to the extirpation of Popery, Prelacie, &c. And whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound Doctrine and the power of godlinesse, (whatsoever respect it may have to *England* and *Ireland* for the future yet) as to *Scotland*, it must more forcibly inferre an abjuration of all these things already found to be such; whereupon it most evidently followeth, that Presbyterian government with its exact paritie, being then the thing sworn by us to be preserved; and Episcopacie in all its degrees abjured, as novations contrary to Truth and Godlinesse: this fixed Presidencie offered, and our consenting thereto, is directly contrary to these Oaths and Ingagements.

But now, let us consider what the Papers say unto this point. And first we are told, *That notwithstanding the many irregularities and violent wayes of pressing and prosecuting of it, yet to them who remain under the conscience of its obligation, and in that, seem invincibly perswaded.*

*It is very pertinent, if true to declare the consistencie of the present government even with that obligation.* 'Tis answered, these insinuations of irregularity and violence being only general, without so much as a condescendencie, let be any verification, I might very justly neglect them; but, being made by a person, who, after being eye witnes to the courses which he reproacheth, did both take the Covenant himself, and administrat it to others; and now notwithstanding that all the cavillations and objections of adversaries have been answered without reply, hath under his hand renounced it, I can not passe them without some admiration of such inconscionable insolence, of which I do hereby desye the Author to acquit himself by any rational and probable instance. we have indeed heard the proud calumnies of prevailing Adversaries but seeing these are certain truths viz. 1. That this Landbeing in the beginning lawfully ingaged in the National Covenant, did upon the occasion of the ensuing and growing defections and novations, very justly both renew and explaine their ingagements, and also censure such, who, by refusing their assent, did evidently declare their apostasie. 2. That not only the communion of Saints, but the very force of that obligation of constant defence and adherence, contained in the *National*, did so constrain us to make the *League and Covenant*, as the visibly necessary mean for that end, and without which conjunction the prelatick partie in *England*, which had twice from thence perfidiously attacked us, prevailing there, had in all probabilitie overwhelmed us, that the refusal of this second Covenant, by any who had taken the first, could not but be construed a breach thereof; and expose them to condigne punishment, 3. That the countenance and confirmation of Authority being demanded, and unjustly refused, to that, for preservation and maintenance, whereof Government it self was set up, can not in reason make the deed so done, for want thereof unlawful. And 4. That the sufferings of recusants in our former times were, either for the merit or number of the delinquents, very small and inconsiderable, and have been by the reuversings and persecutions of these late times so many

many degrees exceeded, that it is ashamè for any person of ingenuity, by accusing the past and owning the present, to shew such partialitie. These I say, being certain truths and so fully held out by several writings on our side, it is impossible but, the same being duely perpended, all the vapour of this smoak must instantly vanish.

But in the next place comes the Authors kindnesse and charitie to relieve such, who labour under an apprehended inconsistencie of these their Oaths with this fixed Presidencie, & in prosecution hereof, he sayeth, *That if men would have the patience to inquire, this our Episcopacie will be found not to be the same with that abjured; for, that is the government of Bishops absolutely by themselves and their Delegates. Chancellours, Archdeacons, &c. As it is expressed in the Article, & was on purpose expressed to difference that frame from other forms of Episcopacie, & particularly from that which is exercised by Bishops joyntly with Presbyters in Presbyteries and Synods, which is now used in this Church.* And here I might again take notice of the grossness of this mistake, supposing our present Church-government, because forsooth it is not exercised by Chancellours, Archdeacons and the rest expressed in the second Article of the Covenant; therefore not to be that which was abjured, but a distinct form managed by Bishops joyntly with Presbyters: whereas it is evident as the Sun-light, that our *Parliament* did not only in preparation to the late change make void the obligation of our *Covenants*, and all the Acts and Authority of former *Tarliaments*, whereby Episcopacie had been abrogate: But also restore and reintegrate the estate of Bishops, to a more full injoyment of Church-power and prerogatives then formerly was granted unto them, yea unto the sole possession and exercise thereof under his Majesty, above all that their Predecessors did ever acclaim: As both from the *Act of Restitution*, and the consequent practices of our Bishops I have already plainly evinced; that so it is beyond all controversie, that the same Episcopacy abjured, what ever it was, was by our late Parliament again restored.

But *Secondly* admitting, that our present frame were in esse  
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such as it is represented, or at least by the proposal of *Accommodation* offered: As the mistake or rather wilfull error of this passage, doth borrow its colour and pretext from the second Article of the Covenant, obliging us to the extirpation of Poperie and Prelacie, that is to say, &c. according to the description there set down; so, the thing obvious to be observed for clearing thereof is that in order to our case in *Scotland* it is not the obligation of this second Article to *extirpate*, that we are principally and in the first place to regard; but it is the positive ingagement of the first, binding, as to *Scotland*, to preserve, and, as to *England* and *Ireland*, to reforme, that is in a manner the key of the whole, in as much as by the Church of *Scotland*, and to endeavour the settlement of the Church of *England*, the second Article is manifestly subjoined by way of execution, *viz.* that for attaining the ends of the first we should endeavour the extirpation of all things therein, either generally or specially enumerat, which two Articles, the one to preserve the then constitution of our Church, with so great contentings lately reformed from this corruption, amongst others, of the Bishops their constant Moderatiship, and the other, to extirpate every thing found to be contrary to sound doctrine, and the Power of Godlinesse, as Episcopacy in all its degrees had been by our Church declared to be, doth certainly make up an obligation most directly opposite to, and inconsistent with this Presidencie re-obtruded.

*Thirdly*, If thir luk-warm Conciliators were as mindful to pay their vows to the most High, as they are bold to devour that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry, in place of this impertinent wresting and misapplication of these obligements in the *League and Covenant*, which do more properly concerne the at-that-time unsetled Estate of *England* and *Ireland*, then the established condition of the Church of *Scotland*, as we shall immediately hear, they would rather consider their own and our obligations by the *National Covenant*, and how in that day of our distresse, and wrestlings from under the yoke of Prelacie, we swore unto the Lord to defend that Reformation whereunto we attained; and

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constantly to reject and labour against all these Novations and corruptions, from which we were then delivered: Under which Head of Novations and Corruptions, I am assured that every considerat person will so easily perceive this Presidencie and Moderatorship o' Bishops to have been abjured, that he will almost as much wonder at the heedlesse expositions of our Adversaries, put upon these Covenants, as pity the sin of their perjurious declaring against them. It is therefore certain, that as, since the Reformation, we had not in *Scotland* that *species* of Prelacie particularly described in the second Article of the *Solemn League*, but the same was therein insert, mainly in order to our neighbour Churches; so the Episcopal Government, at this day restored in *Scotland*, is the same, and worse then what we had before, and the Presidencie now proposed was one of these very corruptions against which we are bound for ever to preserve this Church at that time therefra reformed.

But the Author sayes, *That the Presbyterians in England do generally take notice of this distinction, viz. That by the Covenant the Prelacy only therein described, and not moderat Episcopacie, that is, a form of Synodical Government conjunct with a fixed Presidencie is abjured.* And for proving this assertion, he cites the two Papers of proposals to his Majesty by the Presbyterian Brethren, *Anno 1661.* *Master Baxter* in his treatise of Church-government, and *Theophilus Thimorcus*, in his vindication of the Covenant not to be against all manner of Episcopacy, but that Prelacie only therein specified. It is answered; to measure our main obligation by the Covenant, in order to the Church of *Scotland* by that part of it which was principally intended for the Churches of *England* and *Ireland*, is so grosse and dull an inadvertencie, that, I am sure, nothing, lesse then a judicial delusion could have made a man of the Authors knowledge and sobriety to lapse into it. Nay, seing that he himself doth note, that when that Covenant was framed, there was no Episcopacie at all in being in *Scotland* but in *England* only. Is it not a wonder, that thence concluding that the extirpation of that frame only could then be

meant & intended, his logick should so pitifully fail him as not to adde, *and from that Church alone* where it was seated, which would have so clearly restricted the subject of that Article, that I am certain, at on glance, he had discovered all his applications of it unto *Scotland* as its primarie object to be impertinent. But where there hath appeared no conscience in keeping; why do we expect much sense in interpreting? And we all know, what kinde of person it is of whom *Solomon* saith, *that his eyes are in the ends of the earth.* To bring him back therefore to the purpose, it is the obligation of the Church of *Scotland* & Members thereof in order to its self, anent which we do now inquire, & for clearing thereof it is granted, that by the Solemn League the Church of *Scotland* being then established, the preservation of that establishment, with the duty of extirpation in so far as is necessary thereunto, is only covenanted, which, though it do sufficiently exclude this fixed Presidencie, as contrary to that establishment, and also unto sound doctrine & the power of godlinesse; yet it is by the *National Covenant* & its sub-joined explication whereby not only the Episcopal Government which then was amongst us, & is now restored & advanced, but the Bishops their constant Moderatorship, as a novation and corruption in this Church, is plainly abjured. By all which it is evident, that as the *League and Covenant*, being referred to the *National*, by which the establishment in the former sworne to be preserved was first settled, doth manifestly exclude this *Episcopus Præses*; so the obligation in the *League* to extirpat the Prelacie therein described, only applicable to the Churches where it then was, is most improperly made use of for explaining our ingagement in order to our selves in the case controverted,

Now as to the citations of the *English* Authors adduced, it is certain as to the present question we are not therein much concerned; they speak of the obligation of the Covenant in order to *England*, and how that Article of extirpation for that Church principally provided is to be understood, the thing that pertaineth to us is to consider, how far, either by the *League and Covenant* or any other ingagement, lying upon us, we are bound against all

corruptions to the preservation of the settlement we then enjoyed, which are subjects quite distinct; and thereby this heap of citations gathered by the Author is by one blast dissipated. But lest it may appear hard that we should be bound to such a precise form in *Scotland*, and *England* in that same Covenant left to such a latitude, it is answered, not to reflect upon what might have been the secret designs of some unsound men in this matter which we neither were bound nor could distinctly know, this one thing is evident, that for us in *Scotland*, who could not expect that *England*, groaning to be delivered from Prelacie, should instantly upon our grant of assistance embrace Presbytery in all its forms, of which they had not full and exact knowledge and no experience; and withall, seeing we did hold Presbyterian government to be according to the word of God, and knew the common estimation then made in *England* of the Churches of *Scotland*, *Geneva*, the *Netherlands*, and *France* as the best reformed; the obligation provided in the *Covenant* to endeavour *Englands* reformation according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed Churches, with the Article of extirpation subjoined in its full extent, was certainly at that time all the assurance we could desire, and upon which we did very rationally relye.

Neither is the same in the least impugned by that which is alleged out of the Authors cited; viz. *That many grave men of the Assembly of Divines desired that the word Prelacie might be explained, because it was not all Episcopacy they were against; and therefore the particular description was subjoined: as also some members of Parliament scrupling the meaning of Prelacy, it was resolved with the consent of the Brethren in Scotland, that the Oath was only intended against Prelacy, as then in being in England? And Mr Coleman administering it unto the house of Lords did so explain it: Because as it was indeed very consistent, that in so far as England had then attained, we should have closed with them in a particular Oath for extirpating the evil discovered: And yet for a further advance rest upon the more general obligations, so surely and safely cautioned, until God should give further light; so the common acknowledgment*

of both parties, that the then Prelacie was only expressly abjured, and not all Episcopacie, seeing no species of Episcopacie was on the other hand either by them reserved, or by us consented to, doth nothing contradict why both the rejecting of all Episcopacie, & setting up of Presbytery might not still be covenanted unto under the general provisions: And therefore, seeing it is very agreeable both to Truth and Righteousnesse, that a Church convinced of evils, but not so enlightned as to the remedies; may covenant against the evils in particular, and also to endeavour a full reformation according to the word of God; and, by vertue of this general obligation, become bound to make a more exact search, anent the lawfulnessse or unlawfulnessse of things, anent which in the time of the covenanting they were more hesitant, and after discoverie to reject even that which formerly they thought more probable, It is very evident that all the doubting in *England* anent moderat Episcopacy, at the time of these ingagements, do nothing impede, why both they and we, in our respective stations, are not still obliged to reform that Church from all Episcopacie, and to extirpate it as contrary to the Doctrine, which is according to godlinesse. So that *Englands* latitude, as to this point, is rather apparent then real, and our obligations in order to both Kindomes are in effect *objective* the same. I grant the Authors cited do understand the thing otherwise: but not to tell yow that the proposalls mentioned were neither made nor approven by all, nor belike by the soundest Presbyterians in *England*; that *Mr Baxter* is not singular in this only subject, and that *Timoreus* who hath done very well in his main subject, might have done better in this particular: one thing I am confident to affirme, that the ground which all of them lay down, *viz.* that all manner of Episcopacy was not by the Covenant particularly abjured, is most fallacious, inasmuch as, if it may be demonstrat from the word of God and experience, that all manner of Episcopacy is repugnant thereto and to the power of godlinesse, (as I am sure it may, and it hath been by me essayed) its non-abjuration in special doth nothing militat against the import of the other general Article.

As for the other grounds contained in the Author's citations, viz. the agreeableness of this presencie to the scripture & primitive times, and the custome of our Kirk-sessions; they are already answered: & what Mr Baxter addeth anent the Superintendents & Visitors, which we had in *Scotland* in the begining of the reformation, it is as easily removed by the then infancy of our Church, and extreme penurie of Pastors, as his other argument from the temporary moderators, chosen by Synods for the occasion and to them accountable, is concludent as to the fixed presidents now under question.

To these Authorities the Author subjoines that, *Though we have the names of Dean, Chapter and Commissarie, yet that none of these under that name exerce any part of the discipline, nor is this done by any other having delegation from the Bishops with a total exclusion of the communitie of Presbyters, which is a great part of the difference betwixt that model of Prelacie to be extirpat and this with us.* Who would not pity such folly? who knows not that *Englands* Prelacie was ever different from any Episcopacie that we had in this Church since the Reformation, (although by the way I must reminde my Reader how much by the late restitution it is advanced) but if by the particular obligation to extirpate, contained in the second Article of the *League*, we be only bound to extirpat *Englands* Prelacie, doth it therefore follow, that notwithstanding of the obligation to preserve Presbyterie then settled in *Scotland*, and in general to extirpate every thing contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godlinesse, and especially by vertue of the abjuration, made by us of our former Episcopacy in the *National Covenant*, that yet we are not bound to dissent from & oppose the late restitution, whereby Presbyterian Govern. being overturned, the same, yea a worse bond of Episcopacie then what we abjured, is restored. Really these insinuations are so raw, that I am ashamed to medle with them; & yet the Authors fancie (which all that know him, know to be in him a very over-ruling faculty) being once lesed with this mistake anent the Article for extirpation, he goes on and tells us, that *he will not deny, that the generalitie of the people, yea even of Ministers in*

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*Scotland,*

Scotland, might have understood that Article as against all Episcopacy. But if he will credit truth, he may be better informed, viz. that though the generalitie might very well, by the whole complexed tenor of that Article, understand all Episcopacie to be sworne against, yet it is most certain, that they still understood their principal binding ingagement against it to flow from their abjuration in the year 1638. And their oath, in both the *National*, and *League and Covenant*, to preserve and adhere to Presbyterian paritie then established: and therefore the new discovery here Pretended, as if the Covenant did admit in our Church a moderate Episcopacie, notwithstanding our obligation to extirpate prelacy, with all the ridiculous rattle ensuing, concerning the genuine consistencie of the words of the Article for extirpation, with such a qualified and distinctive sense, and also the meaning of many of the composers and imposers, for a moderate Episcopacy different from that Prelacie, is but the continuance of the same delusion.

But now I hope to awaken this Dreamer, who addes, *That unless we make it appeare, that the Episcopacie now in question with us in Scotland is either contrary to the word, or to the mitigated sense of their own Oath, it would seem more suitable to Christian charity to yeeld to it, as tollerable at least, then to continue so inflexibly fast to their first mistakes, &c.* And with this I heartily close: and therefore seing (not to repeat in this place what I have already proved, viz. that the Episcopacy now among us is not so much as Christs, or true Ecclesiastick-government but meerly his Majesties usurpation over the house of God, which all men ought to abhorre) I say, that seing I have in some measure proven, that the Episcopacy in debate is contrary to the word, and (Whatever may be the impertinent mitigation offered of the Article to extirpat no waves proper to our purpose) that yet it is diametrically opposit to the *National Covenant*, and our abjuration therein contained, and the first Article of the *League*, as above declared; I hope our Adversaries will cease to accuse us of want of charity & of inflexibilitie, but rather yeeld themselves to the conviction of the truth,

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especially to the obligation of our *National Covenant*, which our Author hath hitherto very fatally and foolishly forgotten: and thus I suppose the Bishop, receiving better information of our grounds, will at least cease from his presumptuous confidence, untill he find out for us a more colourable solution.

As to what is added in the Papers of the aversion of some in *England* against the *Covenant*, as being against all Episcopacy, it is evidently a strain of the former ravery; and therefore, mis-regarding both the objection and solution, I come to the next passage, wherein the Author, casting off all fear of God, reverence to the most learned and pious Assemblies that ever sat in *Britain*, respect due to as wise and honourable Parliaments as ever these Nations beheld, the good opinion and charity he ought to have for men and Christians truly such, and regard to his own credit, being once far engaged in these wayes, proceeds without the least verification to give a character of the *Covenant* and its courses, made up of such reproaches of simplicity or cheatry against all engaged in it, perplexity and vexation of all that faithfully adhere to it, and insolent mocking at the overthrow of Gods work and desolation of His Sanctuary, that malice it self could have uttered nothing more false and virulent. *The truth is* (saith he) *that besides many other evils, the iniquity and unhappinessse of such Oaths and Covenants lyes much in this, that being commonly formed by persons, that even amongst themselves are not fully of one minde, but have their different opinions and interests to serve, (and it was so even in this) they are commonly patched up of so many several Articles and Clauses, and these of so versatile and ambiguous termes, that they prove most wretched snares and thickets of briars and thorns to the Consciences of these that are engaged in them, and matter of endless contentions about their true sense, &c. Especially in some such alterations, as alwayes may, and often do, even within a few years, follow after them; for the moulds and productions of such devices are not usually long-lived*

Thus he, And for justifying the censure which seriously I have without prejudice premised; I first inquire, why is there here such an insinuation prefaced of many other evils, whereof

there is not one enumerat? Must we believe the *Covenant* to be worse then can be expressed, because the Accuser can prove nothing? And why is this accusation pretended to be in general of all such *Covenants*, when yet it is expressly intended against the *League and Covenant*? Is it because the Author would have us to reckon it amongst the worst of combinations? Or because he hath the same regard and faith for all *Covenants*, or at least that by such a general he may the better cover the pointednesse of his calumnie only levelled at this.

But taking all to be spoken of our *Covenant*, it is said, *that it was framed by Persons amongst themselves not fully of one minde, but serving their different opinions and interests.* But, 1. Whatever might have been the unsincerity and byasse of a few Persons, as there is nothing perfect; yet that the Bodies of both the Parliaments, Assemblies, and People of these Nations, were acted in the matter of this *League* with such unanimity, straightnesse and zeal for Religion and Liberty, as can not readily be instanced in any Age or Nation, and could only be the effect of a Divine presence and assistance, is unto this day no lesse the comfort of its faithful Adherers, then the confusion of all its Adversaries. 2. As the matter it self was thus carried, so I can appeal to the remembrances of thousands, that the taking & renewing of our *Covenants*, both in this & our neighbour Land was attended with more sincere mournings, serious repentances, and solid conversions, then almost hath been in any dispensation of the Gospel since the dayes of the Apostles. 3. Admitting that the Persons and motives influencing this *Covenant* had been such as is represented, yet, I am perswaded that, such is the truth, righteousness, plainnesse, and consistencie of all its Articles, that considering their brevity, the mighty parties ingaging, and how circumstantiated, with their universal and most important concerne, that which is offered to make its reproach, is the most visible Argument of the Lords over-ruling Providence, and evidence of the *Covenants* glory.

But it is further alledged, *That it is patched up of so many several Articles and clauses, and these too of so versatile and ambiguous termes,*  
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*that it proves a most wretched snare.* Certainly, in fair, yea in charitable, dealing, if the Author had intended either the information of the ignorant, or the conviction of the obstinate, or had but tendered his own repute, so broad and foul a challenge should at least have been qualified by a condescendence. It were easie for me to oppose one general to another; nor do I fear any losse from the inequality of our credit. But I am so perswaded, both from Conscience, Reason, and the common sense of all impartial men, of the falshood of this calummie, that I am angrie that, by this disappointment, he should robe me and our cause of so probable an advantage. I shall not resume the quibblings of the *Oxford* Doctors and others: I freely refer my Reader both to their writings and the answers they have received, yea to the Covenant it self for the best solution. If I may here guesse at the Authors meaning by such circumstances as occurre, the *versatile ambiguitie*, he would objecte, is mostly in the certainty of the obligation of Reformation in order to *England*, (For as to the variety and generalitie of the many Articles and clauses that he mentions, within a little, we shall finde him more particular) and as to this uncertainty, I have so fully evinced the lawfulnessse of the *League* in the matter of the extirpation Covenanted, wherein both parties did clearly agree, and the warrantablenessse of the general clause of Reformation being referred to such a certain Rule as the Word of God, and conformable example, that I am confident (whatever might be mens fraud or failing in the prosecution yet) the Covenant in this part cannot be accused either of uncertainty or ambiguity, without wounding thorow its sides the Scriptures of Truth with the same Darts.

In the next place he tells us, *That by reason of this variety and ambiguity, the Covenant becomes a most wretched snare, a thicket of briars and thorns to Consciences, and a matter of endlesse contention, &c.* Good Sir, why so severe? Sure, whatever ground of complaint others may have in this regard, yow, who have found a way through these briars and thorns, and are come out of this thicket with your coat rougher then at your entrie, have none at

all: And, no doubt, had all ingaged in this Covenant been of a Conscience such as yours, it had been easie for them, by its serpentine subtiltie, and irreligious indifferencie, to have extricated themselves from greater difficulties. But the truth is, the Author hath wickedly broken the *Covenant*, and to disguise it, he would have the world believe, that all who remain faithful are caught in the briars, and detained against their wills. I shall not ask what these snares, thickets and contentions are, whereof he accuseth this ingagement: It is below his dignitie to be so put to it. We know that many, part openly, part more covertly, have dealt very treacherously in this matter; & if thereafter, to palliat their perjury, they have moved debates anent it, is the *Covenant* therewith to be charged? One thing only I must say, that as many of these disputes have taken their various pretensions not from the *Covenant* it self, but from the word of God to which it referres, and which I wish the Author do not account liable to the same exceptions; so, of all the objections moved by such, who, in the succeeding alterations of Providence, have thereby endeavoured to excuse their unstedfastnesse, the Author, of all the greatest changeling, hath here given the poorest and meanest account, scarce sufficient to give a colour to his reproach: and this leads me to notice the great pretense of this complaint, *viz*, that in the revolutions we have seen the *Covenant* hath proven so uneasie. I shall not say that, in this, the very Scriptures of Truth may also be construed an hundred fold more uneasie: But of this I am most assured, that he, who, for himself and others, pleads for a compliant liberty for all these so contrary changes that are gone over us, must not only slack the bonds of the *Covenant* and the Command of God; but of all honesty and ingenuity among men: It remains therefore, that he that would be faithful, aswel as he that would live godly, must resolve to suffer persecution; the contradiction of sinners, and the crosse of Christ have alwayes been the great offence of a foolish world: but who, through uprightnesse and patience for this trouble, do attain unto the promised peace shall never be moved.

As for the Authors observe, that the models & productions of such devices are not usually long-lived; we judge not by such appearances: our establishment is, that God liveth and reigneth, & our Lord is risen again & alive for evermore. This was the primitive consolation: and who knoweth but he may also make this triumphing, as he hath made many the like, to be but for a moment.

But now, when my Author hath run his first career against the *League and Covenant*, poor man, what is all this to *Scotland* principal obligation against all manner of *Episcopacie*, viz. the bond of the *National Covenant*, entered into with so great unanimity, explained in such evident and certain termes, confirmed both by treaties and pacifications, and at last by the full authority both of King, Parliament and General Assembly? Certainly this is that which never entered into his thought, his indignation against the *League* doth so transport him, that there is nothing else which he seemeth to regard: and therefore he goes on, and first he insinuates an excuse for some who he sayes, *in yeeldance to the power that pressed it, and in conformity to the general opinion of this Church, did take the Covenant in the most moderat and least schismatick sense*; sure, this is so suited to the Authors mistakes, that it must only be his own apologie; his head still runs upon the Article for extirpation. And no doubt his sense thereof, as wel for Popery as Prelacie, is as moderate and little schismatick as may be; for all know him to be large as catholick (in the common exception) as Christian. But as for the obligation to preserve the Reformed Religion of the Church of *Scotland*, which this debate mainly respects, I believe he is the first that ever thought it capable of two senses, let be to make choise of the more moderat.

But next, he sayes, he cannot clear them of a great sin, that not only framed such an engine, but violently imposed it upon all ranks of men, nor Ministers and other publick persons only, but the whole body and community; the people, thereby engaging such droves of poor ignorant persons to they know not what, and, to speak freely to such a hodge podge of various concernments, religious and civill, as Church-discipline and Government.

*the privileges of Parliament, the liberties of the Subject, and condigne punishment of Malignants; things hard enough for the wisest and learnedest to draw the just lines of: and therefore certainly, as far from the reach of poor countrey peoples understanding, as from the true interest of their souls, and yet to tie them, by a religious and sacred Oath, either to know all these, or to contend for them blindfold without knowing them, Can there be instanced a greater oppression and tyrannie over consciences then this? Thus he. A weighty accusation indeed if well founded. But though the simple reflection who the framers of the Covenant were, viz. the greatest, wisest, and most Religious Courts of the two Nations, not led by the nose by a Prelatick influence, which their sottish Clergie may not contradict; but using all liberty both of reason and suffrage, may make every one so advertent as to discover the absurdity of this exception: Yet, because it appears to be the Authors last reserve, I shall review it particularly; and, not to stand upon the deceitful phrase of framing ingines which he useth, his first challenge is, *that the Covenant was violently imposed upon all ranks, not only Ministers and publick Persons, but upon the whole body and communitie of the Land.* Certainly to take thir words according to their obvious import, a man would think, it was by a few violent and monstrous Tyrants, who, rising up and prevailing against these Nations, did cudgel all ranks in them to the taking of this Covenant, whereas the known truth, that not only the Nations did by their representatives unanimously, but by themselves, for the far greater part, cheerfully ingage therein, doth render the calumny very palpable. 'Tis true there were a few that did refuse it, but supposing this to have been their single deserving (as for the most part it was not) yet their suffering was so just and notwithstanding moderat, and their number so small as I have above observed, that it cannot give any countenance to the exception.*

The next thing objected is, *that droves of ignorant persons were engaged to they knew not what; and, to speak freely, to such a hodge podge of various concernments religious and civil, &c: who would forbear a free and round reply to such a confident assertion? He cometh forth in a simulat pitee of poor ignorants, and a great resentment*  
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of their being by others abused, and yet I am bold to affirm, that he himself bewrayes as crasse ignorance, in this passage, as is to be found in any among the droves he mentions, and (according to the same proportion) an imposing upon the beliefe of others superlatively presumptuous: And for proving of this, I only ask him, is not every soul bound by the Law of God to maintain his King, his Countrey, and his Neighbours rights, prerogatives, and privileges? Who can deny it? But is he therefore bound to know them all, or to contend for them? Who seeth not the ridiculous vanity, if not blasphemy, of such an emptie dilemma. To be clear therefore and distinct in this matter; to the conviction of the very stiffest Opponent, I say.

1. That an oath, binding simply to particulars of meer fact, doth no doubt require, to the effect it may be sworne in Truth, Righteousnesse, and Judgement, that the taker both know the things sworne to, and be perswaded that they are true and righteous: thus he who ingageth by oath to certain specifick privileges agreed unto, is, no doubt, in conscience first obliged to know both their nature and qualitie, else can not satisfie the fore-mentioned command.

2. On the other hand, if an oath do bind not to matters of meer fact, but to a certain duty, either generally or specially expressed, and in such a manner as clearly intimateth the antecedent rule, whereby it is determined, then this Oath being thus safely cautioned, and in effect only an accessory ingagement, exciting and intending former obligations; but no wayes extending them beyond their limits, the very notion of the duty in general is sufficient, without any further knowledge, to fit the person to bind his soul by such an Oath: for example, he who knoweth no more then the general notion of righteousness may no doubt lawfully sweare to perform all righteousness, although for the time he do not so much as know its common abstract precepts, let be the particular concret deeds that may thereon depend: And the reason is, because, in effect, such an oath doth, in the first place,

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bind to endeavour more distinct and full knowledge, and so can not rationally be thought to suppose it.

3. That in oaths assertorie, which are of a mixed nature, as condescending indeed on certain particulars, but yet only binding to their observance, under the notion, and in the supposition that they are righteous, although because of the condescendence it doth no doubt prerequisite knowledge; yet righteousness being its determining and regulating object, it alloweth upon a better discoverie, not only a rectification of the same particulars without perjury, but also an extension of the Oath to such things, which, being for the time unknown, do afterward fall within its rule and line: thus, if, upon a particular occasion, I swear to my neighbour to maintain his rights, as it doth indeed bind, in the first place, to the definite defence of these which occasioned the Oath, yet so as to admit of an alteration in any thing that shall be afterward found not to be righteous, and consequently no right; so no doubt, as to all his supervenient rights, though afterward only coming to my knowledge, the same Oath doth very justly extend its obligation.

4. As the foregoing rules do abundantly explain the matter of this Oath, with what measure of knowledge it both supposeth and importeth; so the limitation and restriction, to the ingagers place and calling, doth make it in such sort accessory to the former duties incumbent to him, that, in effect both as to the knowledge and performance whereto it binds, it rather intends then ampliats their predetermined obligation. I might have added, in this place, that every affirmative Oath, whether particular or general, doth undoubtedly, in the first place and most obviously, bind *negative*; that is, that the person swearing shall do nothing contrary to, nor obstruct that whereunto he is positively bound. But this is a thing in it self so evident, that though it may be of use in the explication in hand; yet I conceive it sufficient to have observed its omission.

And further, both for illustration and application, I shall adduce no other examples then the things objected. And *first*, passing

sing the mention here made of things religious and civill, which, no doubt, may be very consistently both commanded and ingaged unto together, the swearing of the people to Church-discipline and government is instanced. But if Christ hath in his Church appointed both, and if all Christians be bound to maintain them, as they are thereto called, I am very certain, that to oblige them in their place and calling thereto by oath cannot be disproven. But it may be said, that by the *Covenant* the people became obliged to a particular species of government, of which, in probability, they could not know all the parts, let be to know their warrant. 'Tis answered, the corruptions of Episcopacie having had such an universally grievous influence upon all ranks, and these, with the opposite true form of Presbytery, having been so expressly and plainly laid open and abjured, in the year. 1637. 1638. And 1639. as the people ought in duty to have had a competent knowledge in these matters; so it is very assured, that their knowledge therein was abundantly clear and distinct, as the very considerable remains of it to this day do evince.

The second instance is made of the *privileges of Parliament, liberties of the subject, and condign punishment of Malignants*. But seeing the Kings authority, to the defence whereof the *Covenant* doth also bind, doth undoubtedly include all the righteous prerogatives of the Crown, which are as far, if not more, removed from the knowledge of the common people, then the other heads mentioned, wherefore were they omitted in the condescendence? Is it not because the duty of allegiance binding unto the same things, and whereunto certainly all may lawfully swear, is in effect, liable to the same exception? 2. Although this Oath, in order to privileges and liberties, be not merely indefinit, binding to righteous privileges and liberties in general, to which no doubt every one may lawfully swear; but also assertory of such privileges and liberties, as were at that time by the arbitrarie course of adversaries more especially drawn in question; yet were these privileges then not only upon the same occasion generally known, as concerning, in effect, the very being of Parliaments,

and just freedom of men; but in such manner ingaged unto, under the notion of *righteous*, & what the limitation of the ingagers *place and calling*, that it is most manifest, that this Article of the *Covenant* hath both righteoufnesse, for its formall & regulating object, and also that it neither supposeth nor obligeth any man to more knowledge, then either *de facto* he had before, or is obliged to have by the antecedent duty of his particular vocation: So that the import of this part of the *Covenant* being plainly the same, with that either of our allegiance to the King, or of every citizen to the corporation whereof he is a member, *viz*, that we all maintain and preserve the prerogatives & rights, which in our station we know or ought to know to be such, and to be righteously such, the absurdity here endeavoured to be fastned upon the *Covenant*, as tying either to know simply, or to contend blindfold, is but an empty pitiful vanity. 3. As to that of the *condign punishment of Malignants*, it is abundantly explicable by the same rule: for the men so termed, having, by their mischief, made themselves but too well known, and we being tyed to the discoverie, only as righteous, & in our place & calling, it is as little possible to taxe this or any other the like obligation in the *Covenant* of excesse for its generality, as an Oath to performe all righteoufnesse, wherein, no doubt, all these things are included, & which, without question, all men may lawfully make, albeit they are neither bound to know nor perform any other deeds, then such as their place and calling do require of them.

Which grounds adduced, with what might be further her alledged from the mutual *Covenants* both of men & nations, wherein they lawfully ingage both offensively & defensively to maintain others rights, without so much as the necessity of a particular inquiry thereinto for the time, do, without all peradventure, most convincingly redargue these weak quibblings both of grosse ignorance and calummie. What shall we then say to the folly and bitterness of these reproaches, whereby this Author, upon no better reason then what doth equally militat against all our general obligations either to God or man, is pleased to asperse the *Covenant*, as an *hedge podge of various concernments religious and civil*? What?

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Can not these thing lye easily enough together in an Oath, which yet are all comprehended in the Law of God? Are the Churches true Government, the righteous privileges of Parliaments and liberties of the Subject, and the duty of endeavouring in our place and calling that evil doers may be punished, and the rebels purged out of the Land (upon whom, by the law of God, the hand of all the people is commanded to be) the great concernes both of Religion and Righteousnesse, things either impertinent to any, or in themselves incompatible? Or is it because that our Author hath, by confounding and trampling upon all these things, and betraying at this time the Churches government unto the Supremacie, as, formerly under the Usurpers, he little regarded either the Subjects liberty, or his Prince his Authority, and is known to have alwayes his pretended charity as contracted towards zealous godly protestants, as dilated unto irreligious papists and prelatists, polluted his own conscience, and rendered it unclean, that therefore even this sacred Oath is become unclean and nauseating unto him; what can he reply to these things? Or can he assigne us a better reason for his assertion.

He sayes, *It is hard enough for the wisest and learnedest to draw the just lines of these things, and to give plain definitions of them.* But will it therefore follow, that none but such have any concernment in, or obligation to them: No, this were in effect an inference no lesse, nay more absurd, then to alledge that none are bound, or may swear to maintain his Majesties authority, but such as can draw the just lines of all his prerogatives; or rather that none are obliged to defend his person, but such as can draw his picture to the life. It is therefore certain, that, as all men have undoubtedly an interest more or lesse remote in these matters, so they either really have, or ought to have, a knowledge proportionable to their ingagement thereto, to which an Oath for confirmation is most properly accessory.

The Author add's that *These things are as far from the reach of poor Country Peoples understanding, as from the true interest of their souls.* And O how desirable is it, that this, the one thing necessary, were

indeed the speciall and main care of all men; but to offer to confine poor Peoples knowledge and obligations to their souls interest alone, with an aime so palpable to have all other things abandoned to lust and tyranny, according to the great design of these adversaries, against which this *Covenant* was ingaged in, savours more of hypocrisie then true spirituality: And therefore I say.

1. that the true Discipline and Government of Gods House are in themselves, and have been experimented to be, of such important influence, as to the promoting the great work and ends of the Gospel, the great concern of Gods glory, and wherein no doubt the interest of all souls is involved, that whatever may be in this pretense of abstraction and self- confinement; yet he must needs be of a very *Gallio*-temper that careth for none of these things.

2. Although privileges and liberties, and the punishment of Malignants have no such direct tendencie; yet I am not only assured that, in the then juncture of affaires, their defence was of notable subservience to the preservation and reformation of Religion principally covenanted; but that of themselves, and as to the main of their import, they are so much within the reach of the sense, let be the knowledge, of the meanest of men, that to take them off from their concernment therein, and ingagement thereto, by the insinuation of their souls true interest, will be judged by all ingenuous persons a very cunning and deceitful impertinencie.

Now from the premises that we have heard, the Author concludes in these terms, *So that to ty them (viz. the common people) by a religious & sacred Oath, either to know all these, or to contend for them blindfold without knowing them, can there be instanced a greater oppression & tyranny over Conscience then this? &c.* But seeing it is most certain, that the Oath doth neither tye to know all these, nor yet to contend for them blindfold; but, being entered into from the universal feeling of all ranks of the invasions made and threatned both against Religion and Libertie, did, according to the nature of all such assertory and accessory Covenants, only bind every on in his place and calling, and sutable to that measure of knowledge, which he either  
had,



had, or ought to have, of such general and important concerns to stand to their defence against the common enemy; the ignorance and insolence of this inference doth in deep astonishment only prompt me to say, the Lord rebuke the O Adversarie, The Lord, who hath chosen this poor Church, rebuke thee; Is not the small remnant of the faithful as a brand pluckt out of the fire?

But behold how he wipes his mouth; *Certainly* (sayes he) *they who now govern in this Church cannot be charged with any thing near or like unto it.* No? All pious, holy, tender souls. But seeing I have removed the calumny, the subject of the comparison I will not recriminat; yet we must hear a little of the mens praise, *viz. That whatever they require of Intrants, they neither require subscriptions nor Oaths of Ministers already entered, far lesse of the whole People.* But 1. Seeing there can be no solid distinguishing reason given for this practice, we must conclude Policy to be the only motive of this pretended moderation. 2. The Oath, with the *Act* 1612. prescribed to be taken of Intrants, is so plainly and truly chargeable with a laxe dubious and insnaring generality, that, I am certain, all the light and knowledge, to be found in the most of these who conform to it, will not prevent the Authors being confounded with his own argument. I shall not tell you that therein they sweare to the Supremacy, an infinite myserie of iniquitie; But the point wherein this Oath is really peccant, in all the foul reproaches, wherewith the *Covenant* is falsely loaded, is, that thereby they are bound to defend all Jurisdiccions, Privileges, Preheminencies, and Authorities granted and belonging to his Highnesse, or united to his Royal Crown: Whereby it is clear that they are not only obliged *positive* to whatsoever Priviledges and Prerogatives granted and belonging to the King, without the distinction of righteous or unrighteous, but also without any restriction to their place & callings. Now (not to retort the Authours impertinencies, as if this Oath did tye all Intrants either to know all these things, or to contend for them, blindfold without knowing them) whether this be lawful & righteous,

teous, & whether the common People be more knowing in their own Liberties and their representatives Privileges, or conforming Ministers in his Majesties sublime prerogatives and extensive Jurisdictions, I leave it to every impartial discerner. But 3. What strange hodge podge indeed do we find in this ingagement! all things spiritual, ecclesiastick, and temporal confounded in the Supremacie, is not enough; but the poor Inrrent must further abjure all forreign Powers and Jurisdictions, swear to defend all his Majesties Authorities and Privileges, acknowledge upon Oath, that he holds the Church and his possession of it (if of the King's presentation) *under God, of his Majestie*, doing homage unto the King (and not unto God) for the same (if at the presentation of another) *under God, by the King, of the Patron thereof*: And lastly swear obedience to his Ordinarie in all lawful things, even his Majesties authority, though just now so fully recognised; not excepted. Is not this an odde medly to be hudled up in a sacred oath? Whereof whether every Article therein be more impertinent for an Inrrent Minister of the Gospel, or in it self more obscure and indistinct, really I can not define?

But the Author goes on and tells us that *It were ingenuously done to take some notice of any point of moderation, or any thing else commendable even in our enemies, and not to take any partie in the World for the absolute Standart and unsailing rule of truth and righteousness in all things.* And so it were indeed; but I freely appeal to all ingenuous men, if ever they heard ingenuitie exhorted to, by two such disingenuous insinuations. As *first*, to recommend the moderation of a partie, who, after that they themselves had perjuriously broken their *Covenant* both to God and their Brethren, did in such manner instigate the Powers to rigours, exclusions, and persecutions, against all who in conscience did only refuse to owne and countenance their wicked Apostasy, as had almost ruined a great part of the Kingdom and did at length wearie the very Actors. And *next* to give out as if we were so implicitly wedded to our partie, whereof the least Argument or vestige hath not been made appear, no nor is so much as alledged, but

but as all men do sufficiently know these restraints of want of power in the Clergie, and of better considerations in our Rulers, that have produced the apparent quiet, which is here pretended for moderation; so, we hope that, by a full manifestation of the truth and righteousness of our way, we have in such sort commended ourselves to every mans conscience in the sight of God, as there to leave this accuser of the brethren convicted and confounded both for his open perjury and crafty calumny.

But the Author, as it seems, fearing such a reply, provided a retreat, concluding *But oh! who would not long for the shadows of the evening, and to be at rest from all these poor, childish, trifling contests*: I shall not say, that since he walks so much in darknesse, it is little wonder that he longe for shades: But of this I am very certain, that if he had laboured as seriously upon his Masters *mission*, to reconcile souls unto God, as he seemeth to have travelled upon his Majesties *commission*, to patch up a sinful *Accommodation*, his hope of rest had been both more sweet and more assured; and, in place of the shadows of the evening, he might have promised to himselfe the light inaccessible, for his everlasting refreshment. But seeing these very poor, childish trifling contests, whereby he would cunningly decry all the just oppositions of the faithful to his evil course, are in effect his own devices against the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus, the day wherein every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour, shall make his work manifest, when the fire shall try it: And I heartily wish that the burning thereof may be all his losse.

After the body of one of these Letters, we have a Postscript that is to say (for all the longings for rest we just now heard of) another w<sup>h</sup>ife: As we know who once characterized the Lords Servants, when with much travel labouring in his work; and herein the Author, complementing with an Apology other Churches (joining *Rome* with *England* as is most supposable) wherein Episcopal-government is otherwise exercised, wishes *that the Argument ad hominem* (as he calls it) *by him used, may be brought to the knowledge of such as know least of it, and need it most.* And one part

of his wish, I am sure, I have served by a very candid representation; If the event misgive he must blame himself, his design is to *allay mens extreme fervor by the consideration that this very form, which to us is hateful, is to English Presbyterians desireable; and that upon inquiry, the Reformed Churches abroad will be found to be much of the same opinion.* But seeing I have already demonstrat our present form, as established and exercised, to be not only meer Prelacy, but the very absurd usurpation of the Supremacy; and have also at large excepted against the fixed Presidency of late proposed, and shewed both what the soundest Presbyterians in *England* do think, and all of them ought to think anent it; Why doth our Author, by such weak repetitions, pretend, under the name of *extreme fervor*, to condemn an *aversion*, which alas is in all to remisse? One thing, I shall only adde, that whatever may be the thoughts of Presbyterians in *England*, yet, sure I am that, their engagements in order to *Scotland* are the same with ours; and what these do import is already sufficiently declared. As for the Reformed Churches, I neither decline nor use their testimonies: We are fixed on surer foundations; yet of this I am most perswaded, that as abstracted general questions, are but lame and blind discussions of cases of this nature; so, whereever our case shall be fully and clearly represented, we shall report the assent of all the lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ in integrity and incorruptness.

But we are told, that *perhaps it were not only lawful, but expedient that these, who now govern in this Church, should in some instances use a little more authoritie then they do, provided they applied their power to advance what is good, and not at all against the truth, but alwayes for it: And that all things being so far out of course, the present condition of our Church* (By reason of the irreligion and profanitie that are gone forth from its Prophets unto the whole Land) *Doth require an extraordinary remedy* I wish the Author were as sensible of the cause, as he seems to be of the symptomes of the malady; but to think that the present Church-governours, in the conviction of all sober observers, the main, if not the only, Authors of this mischief, should be intrusted with the cure; what more hopelesse,

or what more ridiculous? I grant the cautions subjoined. *viz*, that *they applied their power, alwayes for, and not against the truth*, if made effectual, would indeed secure the event: But seeing they only promise by supposing it, and consequently are equally doubtful with it, and really such as may recommend the most unwarrantable and improper mean that can be devised, it is evident that this empty probability concludeth nothing: Let the *Tops*, or some thing worse, be set up, in the supposition that he do not apply his power to obstruct, but to advance what is good, and not against, but for the truth, no question there would thence arise a consequential expedience and advantage: But thence to argue for the lawful lesse of such an appointment, were plainly to ranverse all reason and righteousness. As it is therefore from our Lords own warrant and blessing, that we are principally to attend the successe of his ordinances; so, where these cannot be made appear, as in the case of our present Church-government, and on the other hand, the ensuing of Atheism and profanity cannot be denied, the conclusion, that they are to be imputed to the nature of the present establishment, is beyond contradiction.

But our Author sayes, *That these bad fruits ar rather to be imputed to the schisme made by withdrawing from the Government: For there is not a greater enemy in the World to the Power of Religion, then the wranglings and bitter contentions that are raised about the external forms of it.* 'Tis answered, divisions being in themselves alwayes mutual, yea and separation, in some cases, commanded and necessary, to conclude against the thing in common, that which is only peculiar to a particular *specter*, were grossely to confound the commanded out-coming of the People of God from *Babylon*, with the most sinful departing of the worst of Hereticks: It is not therefore separation or withdrawing, in the abstract, but in its complexe causes, conditions & tendency, that we are to regard: he who, in the fear of God, out of a desire to keep himself pure, and for a testimony against evil-doers, withdraweth from such as walk disorderly, & from men of corrupt minds destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godlinesse, doth no lesse obey the will of God, then he

who through proud and bitter contention flowing from some carnal principle and design, breaking the unity of the Spirit and bond of peace, doth wickedly contemn our Lord's new commandment of love. Now, whether the present Prelats & their Dependents, who, for perfidious breach of Covenant with God & man, invading and usurping over Gods House, and ejection & persecuting their faithful Brethren, are justly disowned and discountenanced of all good men, or such, who, having no encouragement from either the call, promise, or presence of God, do, in a tender fear not to partake of other mens sins, abstain from the Assemblies of these evil doers, be from the former grounds more to be blamed for the present withdrawing let all men judge. But as it is not possession, attained by falshood and violence, that makes a right, and the injurious expeller, and not the expelled, is, certainly, the sinful and scismatick divider; so, that the strange perfidy, pride, cruelty, avarice & profaniry of the Prelats, and their abettors and dependers, professing to be the guides of, yea and having their livelihood and wealth by Religion, and yet for the most part not studying so much as to vail their lewdness with a mask of hypocrisy, have rendred Religion it self contemptible, except with a few, who stand at a distance with this horrible thing, is undeniable in its own evidence.

As for the enmity of contentions anent external forms to the Power of Religion, if there be really a worth and singular benefite in such forms & ordinances that our Lord hath appointed for subservient means to the great end of the Gospel; and as visible & certain a prejudice and evil influence in mens corrupt novations, all-contendings about these matters cannot be implicitly censured as bitter wranglings and enmity to the Power of Religion, without the just accusation of a luke warm indifferency in the high concerns of the Gospel: He who judgeth not the purity and liberty of Gospel ordinances worthy to be contended for, will hardly perswade a rational man that ever he will strive for the Faith of the Gospel. But 2. We heartily renounce and disown all wranglings and bitter contention, it is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his patience, & of our testimony, that we hope to overcome; if these be accounted contentious, it is but a small share of the Lords sufferings,



ferings; compared to these reproaches of rebellion and sedition, wherewith he, and his followers have been slandered. It is rather my regret, that, in a time of such backsliding, we have not more saying, from the same reason, with *Jeremiah. Wo is unto men of strife, and men of contention to the whole Earth*. But the peevish Policy of such, who after that, by perjury, contention and violence, they have imposed and pressed their own forms and inventions, and, by the same practices, seated themselves in the possession of what they designed, do in effect retain the same peremptory rigor, and do only decry contention, that they may mock men from any just opposition to their courses, doth not merite any further notice: He who calmly, and impartially considers this whole matter wil easily perceive, that it is neither contention, separation, nor division, things in themselves reciprocal of a middle signification, that are simply to be condemned: But it is from pride, perversnesse, and other evil mixtures and designs, that both their evil and scandal do proceed: And on which side these are to be found, a small reflection may satisfy every inquirer.

But now, after all the vehemence we have heard, the Author, on purpose to amuse where he cannot prevail, falls *awondering to see wise and good men make so great reckoning of certain metaphysical exceptions against some little modes and formalities of difference in the Government, and set so little value upon so great a thing as is the peace of the Church*. 'Tis answered, The redargution, implied in the bosome of this exclamation, doth so palpably occur, that I cannot dissemble the Apostles observation thereby so obviously suggested, *viz. That evil men and seducers waxe worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*; for while in their deceivings they tell us, that not only our reasonings are bare metaphysical exceptions, but that even the things contended for are meer words and formalities; how do they themselves appear to be deceived, who presse these very words & formalities, more then the weightiest affaires in Religion? It being without controversy, that if the argument were equally ballanced, it would begin at home, & by surceasing the pursuit of such vain trifles, thereby most effectually

ally frustrat the contrary defences: But the truth is, whatever the appearances are, neither are we, nor the Author, mistaken upon the matter: A constant fixed *Trafes* on his part, were certainly as little worth all the stir and vexation made about him, as the Bishops their insignificant Dignities and Ceremonies were a cause inferior to the late wars, which they did mostly occasion: And it were a folly insufferable for wise men, so desirous of ease, to set so little value upon so great a thing, as is the peace of both Church and State, disturbed by the present Episcopacy and this Presidencie offered: But seeing it is evident, that the thing designed by this proposal, is a compliance with the present establishment, not only to the relaxing of conscience and the bonds of former engagements, but to the suppression and extirpation of the true Government of Gods House, the acknowledging of, and submitting unto the Supremacy, more absurdly contrary to the Power and Liberty of the Gospel, then its instrument Prelacy, which we have expressly and particularly abjured, can the Author reasonably find fault, if he rencounter in us an opposition commensurat both to the value of the prize, and the measure of his own instance? If men, for poor perishing interests, do endeavour at so high a rate to introduce their modes and inventions, for no other end imaginable, then that by the contrivance and influence thereof, they may have the Gospel Ministry and Kingdom of our Lord still in subjection unto their lusts and pleasures, Should not the lovers of Gods Glory and of their own salvation, the proper and great ends of all Christs institutions, more vigorously resist all these their intended corruptions?

I may not here stand to discuss the specious and flattering pretensions held out by our Adversaries, as if meer subtilties were by us opposed to the solid good of the Churches peace: Certainly he, who remembereth how, in the ancient times of the Church, Satan was very cunning to set the mystery of iniquity on foot, from the smallest and least suspicious beginnings, & yet thence, by more subtle and metaphysical methods then these which our Author undervalued, to carry it on to the very revelation

lation of the Man of sin, and withal considereth in our own late experience the meen entrie, as Kirk-commissioners and constant Moderators, with the suddain elevation and corruption, of King James his Prelats, unlesse he do very supinely misregard the intimation of all present circumstances, specially that of an al-swaying Supremacie already regnant, can neither be ignorant of, nor caught by such devices.

But the Peace of the Church is of great value; Thus they, who have troubled and overturned the righteous Peace of a wel settled Church, are not ashamed to make their possession, attained by wrong and violence, a plea for their security in their evil way; and after that, by breaking their Oath and Covenant, & ranswering the Lords Work and Ministry, they have got what they desired, and used force and compulsion against consciencious Non-conformists, until they are wearied, now they come forth to practise by flatteries a few Syrens, with charmes of peace, canting in Nazianzen's words, ειρήνη φίλη, ειρήνη φίλη, to try if these enticings may be more succesful, and by a strangely comprehensive spirituality both of truth and error, telling us, that when one saith he is for Bishops, another I am for Presbytery, that we are carnal; as if the Apostles censure of a divisive respect of persons were equally against the discrimination of things which the Lord himself hath certainly distinguished: But as, in the competition of peace, the heathens saying, ἀμφὸν γὰρ οὐδὲν φιλοῦν ὅσοι πολεμοῦν τῆς ἀληθείας, might have admonished the Author, and seing that that peace is only precious, which is founded in, & designed for truth; so when it is meerly pretended for procuring a sinful compliance with an evil course, it is but an empty delusion. We know whose practice it was to heal the hurt of the Lords People slightly, saying peace, peace, when there was no peace: To pretend for, nay to pursue seriously after peace, without regard to Truth; Righteousnesse, and Reconciliation with God, is only a precipitant error, and lying vision: But he who stands in the Counsel of the Lord, and causeth his People to hear His Words, should turne them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings: And when the loud and harsh

*noises of our debates shall be turned into the sweeter sound of united mourning and lamenting after the Lord, then, and not before, may we looke that the Lord will return and cause his face to shine on us, and restore unto us his favour, the fountain and blessing of all other blessings: This is the only way, to shew our selves real supplicants for peace; & indeed to remove all the obstructions that may disappoint its firm enjoyment: Nay, this is the mean whereby the sincere seekers of the Lord, do, even in the midst of tribulation, attain to that superexcelling Peace of God, which surely establisheth, and that joy, which no man takes from them.*

But the Author still longing for and hastening to outward peace, not that which the Lord left and gave to his followers, exhorteth unto *a temper receptive of it*, and that is, *great meeknesse and charity*; and, no doubt, in their right application, these are most beautiful graces: but as they seem here to be proposed, for the preposterous courting of this worlds peace, I feare that they are not only unseasonably recommended, in exclusion of the love of Truth and zeal of God, incompatible with the Authors evil courses, but, with an extension of charity to rejoyce in iniquity, and meeknesse towards wickednesse beyond their known and just measures. *It is true whatsoever party or opinion we follow in this matter, the badge, by which we must be known to be followers of Jesus Christ, is this, that we love one another; Yet I must take the liberty to say, first, that in this point to confound persons and things, on purpose to transfer that love and charitie we owe the former to the latter, though never so detestable, is but a silly sophisme. He who rightly esteemeth Christian love will readily acknowledge, that oftentimes the wounds of a friend may be faithful, when his kisses would prove deceitful Next, that though the Author would alleviate our present differences, as amounting to no more then opinions and humours; yet I do really conceive some of them to be of that import. as to judge a perverse and stured enemy, asserting the Supremacie to the manifest denial of Christs Kingdom and Government in His house, not to merite the privelege of one of his*

Disciples; nay, that in order to such, *David's* profession; *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And, am not I grieved, O Lord, with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies*, may rather become our duty. And thence it is, that although this *Law of love be inaeed of Divine right*, & therefore would not be broken by bitter passion and revilings & rooted hatreds, for things in dispute betwixt us; Yet, sure I am, it doth as certainly admit of the foregoing exceptions, as the things questioned are to us without doubt, and only drawn in debate by the perverse disputings of corrupt men: Not that I think that, even in matters most certain, bitier passion, revilings, and rooted hatreds or malice are allowable; nay, this is rather my Authors supposition, and his insinuation, as if we were indeed guilty of these things, is abundantly obvious. But as I am truly perswaded, that all these are in every case unworthy either of truth or a Christian temper; so I am assured, an impartial discernor will find no lesse of vain contempt & saucy undervaluing couched in the Author's affected smoothness, then there doth appear of passion in the most impotent railing; and therefore, it for the rod of pride found in his mouth, I have sometime used a rod for his back; I hope both its justice and expedience will cleare me of any injury.

But he goeth on, *However, are we Christians? Then doubtlesse the things wherein we agree, are incomparably greater then these wherein we disagree, and therefore, in all reason, should be more powerful to unite us then the other to divide us.* Thus I have heard that the Bishop of *Glasgow*, in answer to a person expressing his fears of the return of Popery, told him, what then? We shall still be Christians; a notable use of Christian charity upon the pretext and possession of the name, to give way and countenance to corruptions manifestly tending to the subversion of the thing. But as a real agreement in the greater things of Christianity would certainly prove an infallible mean of reconciliation to most of our differences, and where it cannot reach the full cure, should neverthelesse still treat and handle with all tenderneffe; so it is without controversy, that, on the other hand, even the same reality, let be its simulat pro-  
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session, is so far from perswading to a forbearance or compliance in case of sin, ingredient in incident contests, that it both admitteth dissent, and frequently requireth a contrary testimony and necessary withdrawing as more suteable thereto. But wherefore should I urge such deceitful generals? must we, of necessity, sinne with all Christians, or else divide from them; or if we unite with them, must we therefore sinne and comply with all their errors and defections? And now, for a just retortion the Author, I hope, by his question, doth imply that we are also Christians: Nay, 'tis like, he denieth not but some of us are Christs Ministers; why then are we so hardly dealt with? Why objected, banished, imprisoned, and confined for disagreeing in things far inferior to these, wherein we agree; yea in his own acceptation, but modes and formalities? How will he excuse this in consequence and inequality? Or doth he think, that the vain pretense of Authority abused against us, doth preponderate to this his great consideration, or that it will be an Apology for his so active concurrence.

But, after the manner of the conference at Passy, he is not for debate, when it cometh to a reply; and therefore here restraineth himself with this advice, that *if we love either our own or the Churches Peace, we should most carefully avoid two things, the bestowing of too great zeal upon small things, and too much confidence of opinion upon doubtfull things.* But if his own practice may have any more credit then his words, it is easy, according to his acceptation of Peace, both to redargue this his advice of falshood, and also to exhibite a more true account of his method: For, as in the small and doubtful things by him acknowledged, for such, it is most certain, that, on his side, he hath of late shown a greater zeal and confidence, then ever he did heretofore in all these strange revelations, and important occasions of testimony, both against error and profanitie, that have hapened in the space of his Ministry; and yet no man doubteth but that he is for his own and the Churches peace; so it is evident that his want of zeal for God, together with his compliance with the uppermost power for the time, have been his only advantages. But why trifle I with such



a person? If we love either our own or the Church's true peace, let us first love our Lord Jesus Christ; for He is our peace; His Righteousness, Ministry and Ordinances for these are the means of it: accounting nothing small or doubtful which he hath appointed in order thereunto, and wherein the great ends of the glory of God, and salvation of souls, are visibly concerned. Whether the things in controversy be such or not, I need not again affirm *It is indeed a mad thing to rush on hard and boldly in the dark*, and such a pertinent reflection, in the close of the example, which the Author hath given us of it, attended with so little application, is an evidence beyond all other confirmation. But he that followeth the Lord shall not walk in darknesse.

And now the Author, for a conclusion of this Paper, tells us, *And we all know what kind of person it is, of whom Solomon sayeth, that he rageth and is confident.* And really if I had but the halfe of the Authors confidence, I think I could point out the very man. 'Tis true a weak monastick spirit long habitu'd to an affected abstraction & stoicisme, may render a man lesse capable of stronger passions, and consequently, for a time, exempt him from these ruder eruptions of rage; but whether he rage or laugh there is no rest: and if appearances hold according to the influences, which his last promotion seems to have had upon his dormant corruption, 'tis like, we may very shortly have a prelatick experiment of both. It is enough for us, that the Lord is our light and our strength, and none that love his righteous cause shall ever be assamed.

Now follows the second Paper, or Letter, almost of the same strain, and therefore I shall content my self to review it more succinctly. After the Author hath excused his not adducing of a positive divine warrant for his moderat Episcopacy, by demanding of us the like for our Church-assemblies and their subordinations, which I have already fully answered, he bringeth us in, objecting, that we are not against a fixed President or Bishop or whatever else he be called, our question is about their power. And to this he answereth, *intreating The question may be so stated; for he trusteth that the Bishops shall not be found desirous, to usurp any undue power,*

*power, but ready rather to abate of that power which is reasonable, and conform even to primitive Episcopacy, then that a schisme should therefore be continued in this Church.* It is answered, the Author is mistaken, in the very entry. in as-much as we do not only question the power, but are directly against the preheminance of a fixed *Præses*: for seeing the thing is in it self unwarrantable, and hath proven in the Church, a meer fomentation of pride, and, in its tendency, been inductive of the highest usurpations, as I have shewed, and is therefore by us expressly abjured, how can we in conscience again admit of it? 2. (Not to examine subtilly and strictly the import of the word *power*) seeing its fixedness and its concomitant dignity, that in a great part doth advance this moderatorship, which otherwise would be only an office, unto a superiority, and thereto adde an influence of power, is rather a begging of the question; and therefore though in Civils this fixedness, with its many other prerogatives and powers, be, by reason of the subject matter and expediency of humane affaires, very lawful and allowable; yet in Ecclesiasticks, the very same reason of the different nature of the things, with the constitution of a Gospel-Ministry, and the contradistinction, which our Lord himself hath founded betwixt it and the manner of civil governments, do clearly render this fixed presidency an undue *gravamen*, impinging upon the brotherly parity, and just liberty of his Ministers. And certainly, if the necessary privileges of the naked office, *viz.* that of proposing, directing the consultation, stating the question, asking of opinions and votes, and the casting vote, in case of equality, be of such moment in the conduct of affaires, that all the liberty of the Assembly, and unfixedness and accountableness of the Chairman, are scarce sufficient to secure them from abuse; to enforce them by a fixation, contrary to the Lords appointment of a ministerial parity, is not more unwarrantable then inconvenient. But 3. As these reasons do militat against the controverted Presidency in its greatest simplicity; so the Presidency now offered unto us, for all the abatements pretended, being still that of a Bishop absolutely at this Majesties nomination, nor accountable to these over whom he presides, vested with great  
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temporalities, and, lastly, wholly dependent upon the beck of the Supremacy, is, without all question, a thing most anti-scriptural, unreasonable, & disconform to all pure antiquity. Now, that thus it is, both as to the reality of the thing offered, & the censure I have passed upon it, I here openly challenge the Author and all his partakers, if they dare adventure to contradict me: What other construction can therefore be made of the alledged condescendences, then that in such a mixture they are only empty foolish pretensions? And what other judgment can be given upon the Authors offer to abate of his reasonable power, warranted by primitive example, then that the obligation of reason and pure antiquity are no lesse false then the offer made is simulat and elusory.

But seeing the Author, for all the warrants pretended, doth at least acknowledge himself not to be thereby astricted, but that he can come & go in thir matters at his pleasure; if he do indeed sincerely hate schisme, as he professeth, let him also confesse the violence done both to our consciences and persons in such free & arbitrary things, nay, in his Dialect, trifles, and repent of his late inconsiderat accession.

Passing therefore his deluded believe of the Bishops their not being desirous to usurp any undue power, but rather to abate contrary to their continual practice, & the Churches experience, now for the space of 1200 years & upwards; and evidently repugnant to the manifest conviction of all the circumstances of our case, I go on to his next supposition, *viz.* That though Bishops do stretch their power some what beyond their line, yet, let all the World judge, whether Ministers are for that ingaged to leave their stations, and withdraw from these meetings for discipline which themselves approve. And to this the answer is obvious, that neither the sinful thrusting in of Bishops, nor yet their excessive stretchings are the principal causes of our leaving and withdrawing: When in former times. K. James introduced Prelats into this Church, and they from time to time extended their usurpations, many of the Lords faithful servants in these dayes did neither desert nor withdraw; but continuing with much steadfastness, did constantly resist and testify against all the corruptions, then invading the true Church-

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government, whereof they were possessed. But, as the Author doth here fallaciouſly joyn our leaving of our ſtations (Which is falſe, we having been thence violently expelled) And our withdrawing from their meetings, groundleſſly alledged to be by us approved; (which we hold to be a neceſſary duty) So, whoever conſidereth the manner of the late overturning by ſummary e-jecting of many of us, diſſolving all our Church Aſſemblies, eſta- bliſhing a new government, not in, but over, the Church by the King and his prelates, wherein we never had any place, will eaſily be convinced, that we are not more calumnioſly accuſed by theſe, who would have their own crime to be our ſin of leaving our ſtations, then clearly juſtifiable for withdrawing from theſe their Courts, which are wholly dependent on the Supremacy, and very corrupt Aſſemblies, which we never approved; but have expreſſly abjured. It is not therefore (as G. B. apprehends it) only by reaſon of the Biſhops undue aſſuming of the Preſidency in theſe meetings; nor yet becauſe we are by them reſtrained in, and debarred from, the exerciſe of our power in ordination and excommunication (although theſe be very material grievances) that we do abſtain from their Courts: No; but the plain truth is, that, over and above the foregoing cauſe, we hold the very conſtitution to be ſo much altered from that of a true Eccleſiaſtick Judicatory, called in our Lords Name, and acting by his authority, unto meetings appointed meerly by the King, and recognoſcing his Supremacy, that we judge our not convening therein ought not to be ſo much as termed a privative withdrawing; but that it is in effect a negative diſowning of them as of Aſſemblies, wherein we never had either part or place: which being a ground by himſelf acknowledged, as I have above obſerved, the Doctor's argument, that *the Miniſtry is a complex power, and that ſome of us have accepted a liberty to preach, adminiſter the Sacraments, and exerciſe diſcipline congregationally, without liberty to meet in Treſbyteries and ordain; ſo they may come to Treſbyteries, notwithstanding they ſhould be excluded from the full exerciſe of all their power;* is, by reaſon of the non-exiſtence of the ſubject, viz. true Pres- by-

byteries, utterly cut off: besides, that it also labours of a manifest inconsequence; inasmuch as a Minister's doing, in the first case, all that he is permitted, and only forbearing where a *vis major* doth impede, is no just ground to inferre that therefore, in the second case, he may come to a meeting, and there by surceasing the exercise of his function, and making himself a cypher, for strengthening & encreasing of the Bishops usurpation, in effect, tacitely surrender the power that he is bound to maintain: vvhich tacite surrender I do really iudge to be more strongly implied, and of a more sinistrous consequence, then can be purged by a naked protestation, especially the same being precontrived & capitulated; Whereby, without doubt, the significancy of this remedy, mostly commended by the necessity, and as it were the surprisal of the exigent not admitting of any other, is greatly diminished & impaired. Notwithstanding of all which, this man, whose manner is to multiply assertions without reason, tells us, in this place, that, *When he hath streached his subtilty on the senter-hooke, he can not devise, why we may not joyn in these meetings under the abovementioned restraint:* and againe concludes, *that if after all that he hath said, we do still scruple, either we must be darkened, or he must have owls eyes to see clearly where there is no light.*

But it were endlesse to take notice of all his tatle, and therefore I returne to my Author, who proceeds in his charge against many of us for separating from the publick worship and whole communion of the Church, because of some degree of wrong done them, as they think, in that point of power. It is answered, although to render a solid reason of mens practices, specially when the same are only negative forbearances, whereunto even the forbearers scrupling and doubting doth in a manner and for the time oblige, be not my undertaking; yet, that the accusation here implied is very unjust, both in the extent and cause of the separation objected, is no hard matter to make out.

And, first, it is certain that the allegiance, *that many of us separate from the publick worship and whole communion of the Church,* hath no better ground, then that some of us, because of a just detestation

tion of the perjury, intrusion, profanity, and insufficiency of the Curats, do withdraw from their Ministrie, especially, our true Ministers still remaining, though removed to corners, and our attendance on the Curats their Ministrie being expressly required *as a due acknowledgement of, and compliance with, his Majesties government Ecclesiastick* (O strange!) *and Civil*: now, whether this reason will infer the conclusion made against us, or on the contrary, doth not rather warrant the abstinence, reproached as sinful separation, to be duty, let the impartial judge. I shall not tell you, that, the assuming of the name of the Church, and accusing discountenancers of Separation, have been the common artifices, by which every prevailing sect or party have endeavoured to render their opposites odious: But of this I am very assured, that untill the Author do prove, that the possession of Gods house, which the Curats have taken to themselves, and the concurrence of Authority, wherewith they are supported, doth make them and their meetings, the only Church, his objection of separation is lame and inconcludent. And therefore, seeing that the broken Ministry, scattered Flocks, and secret meetings of the Lords faithful people in this Land, are still his true Church, both suffering and witnessing against the defection and intrusion of transgressors; and seeing that the forbearance, excepted against, is only the effect of a just and hesitant aversation against the pretended Ministry, without either disproving the substance of the Worship, or rejecting and dividing from others that find a greater liberty, his charge of separation is, in this its extent, palpably iniquous.

As for the cause assigned for our alledged withdrawing, not from their Ecclesiastick Courts (for this point is already discussed) but from the publick Worship & Church-communion. *viz. That it is because of some degree of wrong done us, as we think, in the point of power*; Both the known truth of the matter, and what I have already said, do plainly disprove it: The perjury, intrusion, profanity and insufficiency mentioned, can not be in this manner palliate. And I heartly wish, that the Author, who labours



labours so much by his extenuation to cloak the Apostasy, whereby he and others have rebelled against God, broken the Covenant and changed the Ordinances, would yet seriously consider, that God will not thus be mocked. I grant there may be cases, *Where in we may sufficiently acquit ourselves by a free declaring of our opinion, and a modest desiring and waiting for a redresse, and so continuing in the performance of our own duty, though others do, or seem to transgress theirs.* But as it were ridiculous, to make this a *salvo* for all cases, and, in effect, it doth only hold, where our silence at another's transgression by breaking that command, *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother and not suffer sin upon him,* may strengthen the sinners hand, and scandalize others; So, I have already proven, the insinuation here made of our deserting of our duty, to be such an absurd calumny, and the compliance required of us such a manifest partaking in other mens sins, that I wonder at the Author's disingenuity and weaknesse, in attacking us by such generals.

What can be then said to what he subjoines, *viz. Otherwise if we think our selves obliged for every thing that is, or that we judge, faulty in other persons, or the frame of things in the Church, to relinquish either our communion with, or our station in it, what will there be but endlesse swarms of separation and division in any Church under the sun.* Surely this, as to us, must be a very pertinent and convincing reflection; seeing, in the undervaluing sense of any Papist, it would as easily redargue all the Protestant Churches of their separation from Rome. But if in certain clear exigences, either of testifying against, or not partaking of, other mens sins, there may be a necessity of a proportional withdrawing, are therefore all measures broken, and must we be held for relinquishers on every occasion? Or because we are violently expressed, must we therefore be reputed wilful deserters? Who would not pity such dissolute folly? And yet it is all the conclendency of the Authors Argument, whereby he would represente us as Patronizers of endlesse divisions: But if he minde to deal seriously in this matter, all we desire is, that he would first lay down his rules, that we may

know the latitude of his comprehension, and then fairly subsume against us, and if I do not unanswerably prove either his excess in the former, or calumny in the latter then let him glory over us.

In the next place, he again essayes to remove the great *sick*, as he termes it, *the Covenant*, and here waving, forsooth, its irregularities, whereof, notwithstanding their insinuat weight, number and influence, upon such wise and good men as himself, he neither doth adduce, nor can he make out one. And supposing the Oath still to be binding, and that the present Episcopacy in the Church is the same that was abjured, he tells us, that *the Article against it doth only oblige every man, in his calling and station, to extirpate it, but not to extirpate themselves out of their calling and station, if such an Episcopacy shall be introduced and continued against their will.* 'Tis answered, not to repete what I have so often declared, against the present constitution, quite different in its establishment, and many degrees worse then the former, and our obligation by the *Covenant* against it, the whole of this objection is very readily granted: But seeing it is not our, that the far greater part of us were at once, by Proclamation cast out both of our places, pulpits, and parishes, and that our former Church-assemblies, being all at once in the same manner suppressed, we never had any station in these present meetings pretending to the succession, this pitiful quibbling, as if we had extirpate our selves, when we was in effect expelled, is but a poor and weak mint at wit, altogether insufficient to colour its obvious impertinency. As to what doth here ensue for proving, that the present Episcopal government is not the same with that which by the *Covenant* we abjured, and concerning the acceptance that it would find in *England*, I am sure I have considered it at that length, and discussed it upon such evident and certain grounds, as neither the Authors *reason* nor his *prejudice*, his *impartiality* nor *partiality*, with all the *patience* he wished us, and *impatience* which he himself often sheweth, will be able satisfyingly to remove. Whether then the things mentioned in this place by the Author, be indeed

*truths,*

*truths*, as he alledgeth, or *grasse errors and mistakes*, as I have convinced, and his discerning in them, though the best he hath, found, or on the contrary a palpable delusion, I willingly leave it to the Readers ingenuity.

He saith, *if they be truths*, he is sure, *they are perstina truths*, towards the healing of our sad divisions. But when he shall make as much serious search after the cause, as he seemeth to be sensible of the effects, then I am sure he shall acknowledge them to be not only untruths, but most impertinent. *However, if any list to be contentions, he wisheth he could say of this Church, we have no such custome.* And this wish I confesse, is very consequent to both the Authors opinion and design: For, as we have heard him undervalue the Ordinance and Oath of God, though most convincingly sealed amongst us by the Lords Power and presence, *unto modes and trifles*, to the effect he may gain to a compliance, where he can not prevail by his simulat condescendencies; so, at present, supposing them to be as little material, as the length or shortnesse of the excrementitious hair, he endeavours to enervat all the just opposition of the faithful with the reproach of *strange contention*. But seeing the things that we contend for do really merite that immovable stedfastnesse and constant perseverance, so much commended by our Lords command, and the example of all his followers, we hope the custome of perfidious time-serving, which the Prelats have so much practised in this distracted Church, shall never be able to counterballance it: And therefore as these men have by their vain, carnal and violent contentions, at best for their formalities, but, in effect, for fulfilling their sinful lusts and affections, not only dis-edified, but destroyed and subverted the Church of God in this Land, and disobeyed and disgraced the Prince of Peace, whom they pretend to follow; so let us, as the fearers of the God of truth, and true lovers of our Lord Jesus, who is the Truth and also our Peace, considering his example, so much the more *endure contradiction, despise shame and reproach, fight the good fight, keep the faith, and hold fast our integrity, that we may attain unto that Crown of righteousness, which the*

*Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day unto all that love his appearing.*

And now remaineth the Authors *one word*, which, he is sure is undeniable, and he thinks very considerable, and it is, *that he that cannot joyn with the present frame of this Church (And if you please so bring the matter nearer, with the termes of the present Accommodation) could not have lived in the Communion of the Christian Church in the time of the first most famous general Assembly of it, the Council of Nice; yea, to go no higher, though safely I might, (sayes he) he must as certainly have separated from the whole catholick Church in the dayes of the holy Bishop and Martyr Cyprian, upon this very scruple of the Government, as Novatus did upon another occasion.* Whence the Author doth draw his assurance, and whereon it is that he would have us to bestow our consideration, I wish he had been more explicate: That in the times to which he referres there was an Episcopacy well advanced in the Church, and consequently a corruption contracted in its government, and yet by all quietly comported with, I do not deny; and to this, if it should be replied, that there is a hudge disparity betwixt a corruption contracted in lawful government, still holding the head and substance, by our Lords authority given to His Church, the worst that can be supposed of these primitive times, and a Government fundamentally corrupt, deriving all its power from him to whom it doth not belong, and founded in an Antichristian Supremacy, the certain character of the present constitution; I am confident, the Author would not be able to make any satisfying return: But, the true account of the matter is, that in these ancient times, this *Troasassa* having crept in, and from small beginings, and under very specious pretenses, grown up insensibly in the Church, and the mystery therein secretly working not having openly disclosed it self, it is little wonder that, though by the more discerning the evill might be feared, yet never the lesse, no remedy offering, it was not directly opposed; whereas, in our dayes, this latent corruption, with its most pernicious tendency and bitter fruits, being fully discovered, and thereupon by us solemnly ejected and abjured, and now only

re-obtruded, under the gilding of some apparent condescendencies, the better to suppress the true Government of Gods house, which we are bound to preserve, and for establishing the Supremacy, the very consummation of this iniquity. Certainly these things do import a most manifest difference. I shall not here stand to cleare, how that an Oath, though taken upon a matter antecedently binding, doth neverthelesse in such manner superinduce a further obligation, as doth not only more strictly bind to vigilance and circumspection, but also to a measure of zeal against defection, beyond the opposition to that same material transgression formerly required: nor need I to put any in minde, how that the sacrificing to the Lord in the high places, permitted without reproof to *Samuel*, *David*, and *Solomon*, before the building of the Temple, did afterward make an exception from the integrity of succeeding Princes. Certainly, to judge that the continuance of an evil, and a relapse into it are of the same nature, and that at this time we may have the same compliance with this episcopal Presidency, which once it found in the Church, under quite different circumstances, were grossly to confound times, despise warnings, trample upon deliverances, and violate the Oath of God, nay further, to contradict even the principles of these times mentioned, and that to that hight, that I am assured, were the same ancient Christians, boasted of, on life, to see the sad effects that have ensued upon their well-meaning practices, and the patrociny which is thence taken, for the backsliding and overturning of our dayes, their godly sorrow would work in them *a carefulesse, a clearing of themselves, an indignation, a fear, a vehement desire, a zeal, yea, and a revenge* above all the detestation that our Author and his followers do commonly calumniat as fury amongst us. And *Cyprian* in place of his particular above cited *Constitut*, &c. opposed to the then aspiring Prelacy, would become a Presbyterian of the strictest form: and therefore, though I do not owne these accusations of schism & total breach of communion with the Church, wherein the Author is pleased to

state and phrase the difference of present practice, from that of the ancient Church; But on the contrary, I have often and plainly declared, that the sin attending the compliance urged is the plain cause and measure of our withdrawing: Yet that our abstaining from the present Church-meetings, so widely differing from these of the ancient Church, and invironed with circumstances nolesse variant, doth not give ground to so much as that seeming opposition in practice, which the Author objects; But on the contrary, is the very same, which all the faithful therein would have chosen, upon the like exigence, I am confident, all true and serious observers will very readily acknowledge; and consequently that this the Authors *one and last word*, notwithstanding of the enforcing epithets of undeniable and very considerable, wherewith he seconds it, is neverthelesse nothing singular from all the rest premised.

Having thus largely digressed in the review of these Papers, and therein discussed most of the arguments used for this *Accommodation*; it remains that I follow forth the second Article, where I left: And though, for the better reaching of the outmost of our Adversaries pretensions, I have supposed Prelacy to be thereby reduced to a simple Presidency, and, in this sense, argued against it; yet since it is certain, that the nomination and election of the *Episcopus Præses*, who when present is to preside, and when absent, doth, at best, only permit a precarious suffocation, is not to be committed to the Presbyteries suffrage, but absolutely reserved to his Majesty; and, next, that the general of, *all Church-affaires*, and what may be meant by *management*, whether the decision only, when proposed to the Assembly, or both the proposing and deciding, do seem to require a further explication. I think the Article is further liable to these exceptions. I shall not here repeat, what I have said against the unwarrantableness and inevitable prejudice of the abridgement of the Churches just liberty, in the choise of its Moderators, in its several Assemblies, and his Majesties usurpation in this point; the thing which I at present note as defective, and which was also much desiderat, is  
a clear



a clear explanation, whether the power and liberty of proposing be as well offered in this Article to the free vote of the meetings, as the power of deciding seems thereby to be conceded; or whether, according to the scheme of our National Synod, as now settled by Authority of Parliament, the power of proposing is not still to be the privilege of the constant moderator, or rather his Majesties prerogative to be exercised by the meer intervention of the fixed *Protes* as his instrument. I shall not criticize, nor ask how the proposal came to be set down in these terms, *That all Church-affaires shall be managed in Presbyteries & Synods by their free vote, rather then thus, that they shall be managed by Presbyteries & Synods & their free vote.* Onely this I may affirme, that the second member of my doubt is no lesse probable, & consonant to the tenor and prescript of the *Act* mentioned, then evidently elusory of all the other liberties proposed. But wherefore do I hesitate in these smaller matters? The thing here principally to be observed is, that as, by the present establishment, annexing Church power and jurisdiction, to the Kings Crown and Prerogative, and thereby subverting all true Church-government, and making the pretended Presbyteries and Synods only the King and the Prelats their pitiful Conventicles, the first Article inviting to Presbyteries & Synods is rendered vain and void, & all its cautions impertinent; So the Supremacy, now more then ever prevalent, is with this second article, and all the offer of liberty therein held out, plainly inconsistent: for proof whereof, I only desire that the two may be impartially compared. The Article sayes, *that all Church-affaires shall be managed in Presbyteries or Synods by their free vote.* And the *Act* of Supremacy statutes that his *Majesty* may enact, concerning all meetings and matters Ecclesiastick, *what in his Royal wisdom he shall think fit.* How then can these two consist? or in what manner can they be reconciled? If these Meetings and the power of the Supremacy were both of the same kinde, and did stand in the same line, I know the subordination of Synods and Presbyteries to General Assemblies might easily explain the difficulty, but seeing a subordination of this sort betwixt these Courts and this high prerogative;

rive, would, in effect, destroy their true being and essence; and, on the other hand, to imagine that by this *Accommodation*, there is any derogation of the Supremacy intended so much as to be connived at, were foolish and presumptuous. It is clear that the Supremacy, and the liberty here pretended cannot rationally be composed; if therefore the Accommodators would deal uprightly in this affair, let them *first* shew us where these Presbyteries and Synods are, to which they would have us to come, and *next* cause us to understand the truth and reality of the just liberty they seem to offer, and then boast of their condescendencies. But while they suppose things for uncontroverted grounds, which are warrantably and plainly by us denied, and then would ingage us by a form of specious concessions, wanting al real foundation, they only discover their own palpable weaknesse or more unpardonnable disingenuity.

The third Article bears, *If any difference fall out in the diocessan Synods betwixt any of the members thereof it shall be lawful to appeal to a Provincial or their Committy.* That this Provincial is founded upon, and overswayed by the Supremacy; and ther by manifestly disprovable, as neither a true Ecclesiastick-Court, nor enjoying any competent measure of power & liberty, is abundantly confirmed by the arguments above adduced against the preceeding articles. The singularities that here occurre are, that the constitution of a Provincial Assembly, being a Court not in use amongst us, should have been expressly declared. 2. That if we may guesse at this by *Vssers* reduction, and according to the present establishment, it must consist of members *viz.* the *Bishops and Deans or constant Moderators* of the province, both more unwarrantable as to their office, and corrupt in their practices then the ordinary constituents of inferior meetings. 3. That this provincial is to have a Committie which being yet very unlawfully established for a perpetual Court, can only conduce to the greater strengthening of the Archbishop's primacy, and the over sway of the subjected Assemblies: But seeing the Bishop, in his last conference, hath passed from this Article, I shall not pursue it any further,

further; only the gradation here traced of Presbyteries, Synods, and Provincial Assemblies moveth me to enquire, wherefore no mention of National Assemblies, a Court not only the Supreme in that scale, but so distinctly defined by a particular *Act*, viz. *Act* 4. 1663. in its Members, methods of procedor, and extent of power, that I cannot judge its omission accidental and undesigned; nay in effect it is a reserve which doth so unquestionably secure the whole interests and designs of Prelacy, and so evidently redargue all the proposals made of a trepanning mockery, that as I seriously marvel, how the Accommodators, knowing of this ultimate resort, so strongly complicated of all the strength of the Supremacy and Prelacy, did not extend their other concessions to all things else that could be demurred; so I am no lesse to seek, wherefore the Brethren, who treated, did except so little against it. I need not here exhibite any long description of this Court, which I have several times above mentioned: The *Act* is full and plain to the meanest capacity: The King, in the very entry, assumes to himself not the indiction only (Which was all that, after long contendings, the more consistent usurpation of former times did by the *Act* 1612. ascribe unto him) but the constitution of this National Synod, whereby having named and appointed the members and the Archbishop of *S. Andrews* for President, with an expresse limitation of the time and place of their meeting to his Majesties order, and of the matters to be treated and determined, concerning Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, to his Royal pleasure, to be signified in write to the President above named. The King, with the advice of the Estates, confirmeth the same, as the lawful constitution of our Church-assemblies, provided that the King or his Commissioner be alwayes present, and that no *Act* or *Order* be owned as such, but that which shall be agreed upon by the President and major part of the members, and not contrary to the Kings prerogative, or law of the Kingdom. And lastly, that no *Act*, matter or cause be debated, consulted, and concluded, but what shall be allowed and confirmed by his Majesty or his Commissioner

missioner for the time. Now, I say, this Act and Constitution still standing & remaining, let any ingenuous person declare singly, what he thinketh all the proposals so long tinckled upon can signify, or what liberty have the dissenting Presbyterian brethren, which may not hereby be restrained and rendered ineffectual? And what abatement is there condescended unto of the exorbitant powers of Prelacy, which is not here either formally or virtually repaired? And, in a word, what good can we expect by any Accommodation, which may not by this frame be certainly frustrat and made void. I have not, in this place, noted the strange and palpable usurpations of the Supremacie against the Lord, and over his Church, which this device and project contains; because, as, in all the parts and passages of our present establishment, the vestiges of that wickednesse are very conspicuous; so, it is in this Act that they are visible in their highest exaltation.

From all which it may very easily be gathered that the Bishop's policy, in his silence on this point, was no lesse necessary for the carrying on of his intencion, then the reservation of the thing the very *colluiter* of all corruption of Church-government, deriving its influence and perversions unto all inferior and subordinat Assemblies, doth render all the other overtures of agreement elusory and insignificant.

The fourth Article is, *that Intrants being lawfully presented by the Patron and duly tryed by the Presbytery, there shall be a day agreed upon by the Bishop and Presbytery, for their meeting together for their solemn ordination and admission, at which there shall be one appointed to preach, and that it shall be at the parish Church where he is to be admitted, except in the case of impossibility, or extreme inconveniency; and if any difference fall in touching that affair, it shal be referable to the provincial Synod, or the Committee, as any other matter.* This is the Article, but there is nothing found, the very entrie offends; nor that I judge that for the single cause of Patronages being restored, and presentations made requisite for intituling to a stipend or benefice, Intrants (all other things being plain) should stand off and

may not lawfully enter that way; No, though patronages be indeed in themselves a heavy grievance, and in their exercise, for the most part, partial and sinful, and upon these grounds, by an expresse Act in the year 1649. abolished; yet to Intrants otherwise innocent they are certainly only the greatest injurie. But the thing I except, is, 1. That according to this proposal it seems Ministers formerly lawfully called and ordained, and now wrongfully oured, shall have no regresse to the exercise of their Ministry, save by this method, which certainly in these circumstances can not but render the pressure far more uneasy. 2. What shall become of Patronages pertaining to Bishops, and of other Churches which are of their patrimony? Certainly this is a point not so far without our line, but at least in a conjunction with the many other things that justly grieve us it may make a part of our re-grete.

But I proceed to take notice of the manner of Ordination here discribed, and passing the trial previously appointed, It is proposed that *there shall be a day agreed upon by the Bishop and Presbytery for their meeting together, for the solemn ordination of Intrants*: By which it is evident, that it is not the vote of the plurality, that in this matter, can make a determination; no, the Bishop and Presbytery must both agree to this appointment, the whole Presbytery cannot overrule him in it. And here I cannot but observe the cunning slieness of this draught. The Bishop in all his discourses and treatises hath still, in this point of Ordination, kept himself in the clouds; To assume to himself the sole power of Ordination or a negative voice and part in it is more than all his musty alledgences, from obscure antiquity, and declining purity, for his fixed presidency, will amount unto; and to descend to posterior Ages of the Church, would be of a consequence no lesse dangerous, as to the many corruptions that then were crept in, then the ascending to the prior times of scripture light would prove contrary to this prelatick arrogance. On the other hand, seeing both the humor and design of Episcopacy ingage him to be principal in the action of Ordination, therein to be subject to the

determination of the suffrage of the Presbytery, is nothing agreeable, and can not be digested. And what variety in his discourses this halting ambiguity hath produced, I leave it to such as have had the opportunity to observe: But now that we have him in write, it is worth our pains to consider the contrivance.

We have heard, in the second Article, that he is willing that *Church-matters be managed in Presbyteries and Synods by the vote of the plurality*, a fair insinuation that the matter of Ordination shall be in the same manner transacted: And in this Article he leaves the trial to the Presbytery, consents that, if possible, the Ordination be at the parish Church, where one shall be appointed to preach, and, lastly, is content differences falling in be referred to the Superior Courts; all fair generals. But wherefore no mention who shall be the actual ordainers, whether the Bishop and whole Presbytery, or the Bishop alone in behalfe and as Mederator of the Presbytery, or the Bishop alone as indeed something greater (whether as in a superior order, or only in a higher degree is but a School nicety) then either a Presbyter, or the Presbytery, & to whose office this part doth properly belong? And, as to these things, though we be left in the dark, yet many palpable indications lead us to feel this last to be the thing designed, against which, if I might now stand to debate, I could show this not only to be contrary to Evangelick parity and simplicity and Apostolick practice, and destitute even of these pretended testimonies of the next Ages for a fixed *proslafia*; but that it hath been one of the main impostures of the prelatick Spirit, first injuriously to usurpe, and then mysteriously to involve the matter of Ordination, that the Bishops might have the dignity to be its proper dispensators and the mystery of iniquity be the more thereby advanced.

But the point here most remakable is, that apprehending his condescendencies might render him, as being obnoxious to the plurality of voices, of lesse power and influence in this affair, Behold how craftily he goeth about to salve his *negative*, which he may not, for fear of a discovery, plainly owne, and that is, by  
making



making the appointment of the day for ordaining to depend on his and the Presbyteries joyn't agreement, wherein if he please to be a dissenter, it is certain that his not assenting to this circumstance will be of no lesse consequence for his purpose, then if he had reserved unto himself an inhibiting *veto*, upon the substance of the whole businesse.

Now, that this power, in what sort soever by him couched and covered, is not to be allowed, his want of any sufficient warrant for it doth abundantly evince. And further what the Scripture and Apostolick rule in this affair is, these few considerations may in this place satisfie.

1. That the power of Ordination is certainly annexed to, & dependent upon, the pastoral charge; for, seeing that the cure committed to the Apostles, and by them to succeeding Pastors, could not be perpetuat without a succession, the evident reason of the thing it self, with the import of that command, *The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*, do plainly perswade the assertion.

2. As we find in Scripture the Apostles and others upon occasion by themselves alone ordaining, so whereever a concurrence did offer, we may observe the Act to be alwayes joyn'tly done and administrat; so we find the twelve joyn'tly ordaining and laying their hands upon the seven Deacons, without any prerogative acclaimed by *Peter*, who yet, if falshoods may be compared, hath more apparent grounds in Scripture for his Primacy, then can be shewed for the Presidency of any Bishop. Next we have the fraternity of Prophets and Teachers at *Antioch* sending forth and imposing hands upon *Barnabas* and *Saul*, by a like equall conjunction.

3. It is said of *Paul* and *Barnabas* that they (in a plural union) Did ordain Elders in every Church

And 4. it is manifest that *Paul*, by reason of his concurrence with other Presbyters in the Ordination of *Timothie*, doth attribut the same act indifferently to his own hands and, to the hands of the Presbytery. Which Scripture-grounds

being joyned to the want of any probable reason for this singularity, and the manifestly woful and sad consequences of this Episcopal imparity with the present unquestionable design of bearing down the just liberty and authority of the Lord's Ministers, in a convenient Subserviency to mens lusts and wickednesse, by the stiff and inflexible retaining of this privilege, do, I am confident, make out the eccentric preheminance acclaimed to be not only in it self unlawfull, but by our solemn Oaths to maintain Presbytery, and extirpat every thing that shall be found to be contrary to sound Doctrine and the power of godlinesse perpetually abjured. Seing therefore that this Article doth certainly imply this corruption, as I have above declared, that it can have no better acceptance from us, then the preceeding, needeth no further reasoning. As for the other trifling circumstances, whereby the principal thing in it, is endeavoured to be palliat, they do not merite any more speciall inquiry.

The fift Article is, *It is not to be doubted but the Lord Commissioner will make good what he offered anent the establishment of Presbyteries and Synods; and we trust his Grace will procure such security to the Brethren for declaring their judgment, that they may do it without any hazard in countervailing any law, and that the Bishop shall humbly and earnestly recommend this to his Grace.* This Article made up of uncertain assurances, ridiculous trusts, and the Bishop's conformable undertaking, is already by me sufficiently examined, in the very entry of this discourse; and there told, that what the Commissioner did undertake anent the establishment of Presbyteries, I did not exactly know; but if it was that which is reported, viz, that they should be set up as preceeding the 1638. I thought it could contribute nothing to the removal of our just exceptions. I shall not here offend the Reader by a vain repetition; but seing the grounds formerly laid down are very material, and yet by the most part little adverted to, it will not be amisse that, after the full and plain account I have given of these matters, I again run over them; and

1. That according to the principles of truth, Presbyteries are not founded

founded in any humane establishment, but in the right and Authority which our Lord hath given unto his Church, is our constant perswasion: so that, though the accessory confirmation and countenance of the powers may be of great use to, and no lesse acceptance with the Church, yet it is no part of their original right.

2. Before the 1638. and even until the Year 1661. Presbyteries were founded and did continue in this Church, not by vertue of any *Act of Parliament*, whereby they were properly authorized; but upon the *basis* of that intrinseck right, which I have already mentioned. Thus having conveened and settled themselves shortly after the Reformation, they continued their possession uninterrupted until the Year 1661. It is true, they obtained the confirmation of King and Parliament in the Year 1592. as also in the Year 1612. many corruptions introduced, and invasions made by the Prelats upon the rights and privileges of these Assemblies, were by the same Authority, ratified and approven: but as by the latter *Act* their being was not totally dissolved; so it is not unto the former that they do owe their fundamental establishment.

3. All that can be probably gathered from what is promised, is, that possibly to some such apparent mixture of Episcopacy and Presbytery, now to be formed, as did result from the intrusion of Prelats upon Presbyteries, before the 1638. the civil sanction may be interposed: But since now the case is vastly altered, and that in effect, at present, there is not so much as any kinde of true Ecclesiastick government or meeting to be found among the Prelats and their Dependents; nay, that all we are to expect is some hodge podge device of Supremacy accommodat to its desires, and directly and absolutely subjected to its pretended omnipotency, it is clear and certain, that this mistaken project can afford us no clearing: If any man judge me uncharitable, how glad would I be to be found really in the wrong? But seeing it is evident, that the Supremacy is rather more and more ascendent, and that there is not the least probability either of its mitigation, or of the rescif-

rescission of the *Act for Restitution*, &c. Anno 1662. and yet far lesse the revreating of the Proclamation *January* 1662. dissolving Presbyteries, and of their, and their true members reestablishment, all requisite to give the Lord Commissioner's offer (if any such was made) a genuine and satisfactory meaning, why should we preserve an illusive charity to plain and solid ingenuity.

But if any man will still contend, the comparing together of the first and second part of this Article, I am certain, will prove sufficient to convince the most inflexible opiniafter. In the first part, *It is not doubted, but the King's Commissioner will make good his offer, viz* to set up Presbyteries as before 1638 In the second, *it is hoped, that he will procure due security to the Brethren in the free declaration of their judgement*. But if true Presbyteries be rightly restored this security is clearly superfluous; and if they shall not be restored in that integrity, but by vertue of the Supremacy, on which they depend, reduced to the figure of the then model, by authorizing the above mentioned mixture, it is evident, that in place of resolution, we have only an arbitrary politick alteration, a compliance wherewith no declaration & protestation can in any wise purge, as I have already fully proven: And this is indeed one of the reasons, why I termed the Bishops trust ridiculous. But yet I confesse there are other causes that do more provoke me to this character, the one is, that it should be imagined, that Governours will give an antecedent licence to transgresse lawes, which neverthelesse in all probability they have not the least intention to repeal; the other is, that the Bishop should suppose that a testimony, requisite upon the account of duty, may be either forborn or suspended, for want of an assured immunity; whereas it is most certain, that whereever faithfulnessse to God doth require our appearance, though in the things that are least, the fear of man, that bringeth a snare, is not to be regarded, much lesse to be therewith ballanced. I acknowledge indeed, that the faint and pusillanimous dealing of some of the Brethren, who conferred, in making this their scruple, seems to have drawn from the Bishop this insinuat sollution, and I should verily have  
taken

taken it for a scornful indulgence, if he had not to his hope adjoyned the promise of his humble and earnest intercession. But seeing it is to be by all regretted, & we hope shall be by the decliners themselves bitterly mourned for, that being in so just and so good a cause not only called, but in effect openly provoked and basted to give an answer with reasons, to the demand made unto them, they did not so sanctify the Lord God in their hearts, and with their tongues, as to shew a readinesse thereto with meeknesse and fear, let be to give a testimony for God in such an important exigence, it is evident that this pitiful caveat with the promise annexed are at best but the effects of a carnal condescendence unto a sinful fear. If the Lord call for our confession, who ever heard that that, which is its special grace, even the obvious apprehension of hazard, should be its hinderance? Nay, who is man in that case of whom we should be afraid? But and if the Lord require it not, this is certainly a foolish antidote to a vain solicitude.

And thus we are arrived at the sixth & last Article, *That no Inward shall be engaged to any canonical oath, or subscription unto the Bishop; and that his opinion anent that government shall not prejudice him in this, but it shall be free for him to declare.* And this is truly the only fair condescendence that of them all hath any thing of a just ease; But seeing it is very inadequat to the main difficulty, and for an apparent liberty of opinion doth certainly tend, according to the late morality of these times, to involve us in many sinful and inconsistent practices, I shall not further urge it.

And now having finished the examination of these six Articles, & therein, amongst many other empty pretensions, and inextricable ambiguities, rencountered a most cunning & viperous investive against the *League and Covenant*, consisting of the like number, as if it were a meer politick complication of doubts and snares, for the more clear redargution of the Authors presumption and malice, I cannot but desire my Reader, impartially to consider both, and what, and with what successe boht of us have objected, and, I am confident, that though an al most

infinite over proportion of matter for importance, as well as variety, the greatest diversity of humors, interests, opinions, nay and almost of Nations, that ever concurred in one treaty, with the no lesse disproportion of parts and abilities in us, the two Antagonists, do every way increase and accumulate the disadvantages on my part; yet it will appeare, that such is the power and vertue of a righteous cause that where in the attacking the Covenant the Authour hath carried back nothing but his own shame and our scorne, the truth, not I, hath, on the other side, dissipated and routed his Articles with an entire victory, which if he or any man account vain, or a preposterous triumph, it is only truths confidence, and I do hereby confirm it with a no lesse resolute defiance.

Hitherto I have examined this overture of *Accommodation*, according to its terms contained in the above-written Articles. As for the exceptions that may be made against it from its contrivance, tendency, and circumstances, the inconveniencies that would ensue upon it, and other more remote arguments, they are so easily deduceable from the preceeding grounds, that it were superfluous to prosecute them by any more distinct proposal. That we may therefore, once for all, review and summe up the manifold and manifest evils of this device, not more conceited and boasted of by its contrivers, the Servants of men, then deservedly rejected by all the true Ministers of our Lord Jesus Christ: Notwithstanding of all the specious pretexts and fair smoothings that have been adhibite for trimming up this *Accommodation* to an alluring and taking condescendence; yet, I am perswaded, that who ever seriously ponders what hath been said upon it, will be quickly convinced that the difficulties following do still remain as invincible impediments to all conscientious men.

*First*, That a conjunction with and in the present Church meetings, is a certain acknowledgment of, and participation with the present Ecclesiastick - government, which in effect is not truly such, but a meer politick constitution wholly dependent upon,  
and



and resolving in the Supremacy, wherein no faithful Minister can take part,

*Secondly*, That this conjunction doth evidently infer a consene and submission to this Supremacy, as arrant an usurpation upon the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in and over his Church, as ever did dare the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords in any age.

*Thirdly*, That though this consent could not be objected, yet such is the present elevation of this all-swaying Prerogative, not intended to be depressed, that all other concessions, though in themselves satisfying, would thereby be deprived of any consistent assurance; and rendered wholly elusory. And really, when I reflect upon these particulars, I cannot forbear to ask, with what conscience can Ministers rather partake in Church-meetings framed by, and under the power of the Supremacy, then if the Bishops were therein still to domineer after the rate of the highest Prelacy? Or what delusion can be more ridiculous, then that men excepting against meetings, because of the Bishops usurpation therein, should upon the vacating and reassuming of this power by the King as Supreme, be thereby enticed unto a compliance.

But, *Fourthly*, as these meetings are founded upon, and absolutely subjected unto the Supremacy; so the often cited *Proclamation*, and *Act of Resitution* tell us, that they are authorized and ordered by the Archbishop and Bishop; and consequently do in such manner derive their Authority from them, that the Members do only act therein as the Bishops their Delegates, or rather as the subdelegates of his Majesties Delegates, a strange accumulation of absurdities, which, I am certain, this constitution standing, cannot be salved by any overture whatsoever.

*Fifthly*, The meetings, whereunto we are invited, do consist of such members for their perjurious intrusion, and canonical servitude (to say nothing of their more extrinseck delinquencies of profanity, insufficiency, and irreligion) as may not only warrant a non-conjunction, but a positive separation. And certainly if the lower degree of these crimes, in the time of the former Bishops

hops, did even, under that different constitution, offend some of the Lords faithful servants to an abhorrent with drawing, how much more should their brimful measures in our dayes, with the duty of a testimony, which our Covenant, and mens unparalleled backslidings, do now require, justify our detestation? It is true *G. B.* tells us that under this there may be a fear in us, that we shall not carry things as we would, which he thinks, is very little suitable to the patience we plead for: But really, so long as our will is moved and directed by the Rules, and in order to the ends, which our Lord hath appointed to these Courts, I see not how this fear can be condemned, as either ambitious, or disagreeable to our principles.

*Sixty*, Notwithstanding of any thing conceded by the Articles, and over and above all that hath been said against an *Episcopus Praeses*, even in the most moderate acceptation, the Bishop as offered to be reduced, is repugnant both to Scripture, purer antiquity, and our solemn Oaths and Ingagements, inconsistent with the principles of Presbytery, and in effect very little lowered from any of these powers and rights which he acclaimes, in as much as he is still at the King's nomination and not subject to either the censure or control of the meetings, over which he doth preside. 2. He retaineth all his vain and absurd temporalities. 3. As constant Moderator the power of proposing and the method of handling and voting any matter controverted, with the care and direction of the execution of any sentence pronounced, pertaineth to him solely. 4. For any thing as yet declared, the Bishop must have at least a more eminent power and suffrage, in the matter of Ordination and Excommunication: and, in this point, not only the Articles are most suspiciously reserved and obscure, but if we take notice of the Accommodators their other discourses and writings, we have little reason to doubt that the power of both is to abide with him, as it was established by the *Act* 1612. and observed before 1638. So that, in my opinion, all the ease offered by the Accommodation may be very quickly calculat; and in a word amounts to this only, that  
where

where now these meetings, do by a precarious tolerance consult and determine in lesser matters, and in things more weighty, do rather prepare and ripen to the Bishop's decision, who also ordaines and censures with very little ceremony, by this Treatie and its Articles, over and above the wretched *salvo* of a passion-ed and contrariant protestation, this tolerance is to be changed into a more assured liberty, as to the Bishop, but every whit as dependent upon the King as Supreme; And the acts of ordination and excommunication are to be passed and performed, more publickly and with greater solemnity. Which observation, I must confesse, is to me so obvious, that it hath been alwayes attended with no lesse perswasion, that if the Bishop did not judge our consciences as peevish and fickle, as he esteemeth the matters in difference frivolous and empty trifles, he would not have this risced his own reputation, in all the business and stir he hath made about such a nothing of condescendence. Of which I am the more confirmed, that though the papers which I have discussed were by the Bishop acknowledged to have been written some years ago, and do all along conclude a conformity to the present establishment; yet the Bishop very justly, though imprudently, supposing the case to be still the same, hath made much use of them of late without the least alteration to ingage us unto the terms of his new agreement.

*Seventhly*, This *Accommodation* utterly disowns & cuts off the Ruling Elder, an officer not only clearly warranted from Scripture and the nature of the Churches constitution, and singularly commended by his usefulness; but in some respect countenanced even by the mixtures we see in his Masters ecclesiastick commission.

*Eighthly*, The Terms offered being proposed with this expresse condition, (*Episcopacy being alwayes preserved*) and in effect so fully retaining the substance of all the corruptions and grievances of that model and frame, by us very solemnly and often abjured both by the *National* and the *Sol:mn League and Covenant*, to close and comply therewith were, at least, to desert the Lords cause, by

casting away the word of his patience in this hour of temptation, and to give our selves to that detestable indifferency and neutrality, which we have by Oath so enixly renounced.

*Ninthly*, The embracing of this pretended coalition, but real suppression of Presbyterian Government, would not only be a total surrender of that interest unto the will of its adversaries; but ingage us into snares contentions, offences, and temptations, that may be better foreseen then they can be numbred, let be prevented. The Authors propone peace, as the scope of their overture, and yet they know, nay do expressly provide a liberty for the differences and protestations, that must necessarily ensue: What a strange method have we here of composing strife, neither by removing the grounds, nor separating the parties; but plainly, by joyning them in their declared opposition and sworn contrary endeavours, of the one to maintain, and the other to extirpat, to exasperate the feuds? And is not this one reflection sufficient to redargue the insincerity of this whole project, and to informe all men, that it is not union, but the very extinction of Presbytery that is thereby designed?

I shall not here note, that the Brethren, being once brought in to these meetings, where there will be infallibly, no less discord then inequality, it is not to be doubted, but the hatred, envie and jealousies of the stronger against the weaker would in this juncture, so fertile of occasions, soon procure the latter to be deposed and ejected. And that by a power, which they could not so well disowne. But this, I am sure, would in that event fall out so acceptable to the patient, that I shall not, at present, reckon it as an inconvenience. The evils more to be considered are, that as no conscientious man can rationally hold out the smallest benefite or use of edification, that can arise to the Church of Christ by this so heterogenious, distracted, and unequal association; so, what can be thence expected, except either the temptation of continual heats, sorrowes and offences, or rather, according to the present too visible decay, the cooling of zeal, the declining to luke warmness, the ensnaring of consciences, con-

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living at corrupt Acts and practices, the partaking of other mens sins, and the evill example, stumbling and grief, that will thereon redound to all the fearers of God and lovers of his righteous cause. I do not here make mention of the offence of the people, as some do, who use it as an argument, yea their main one, that this Accommodation being displeasing by provoking them to withdraw from such as close with it would defeat its own design. No, if the thing be righteous and otherwise expedient, to indulge to humors is indeed a vain popularitie: And I am heartily sorry, that good men, in so good a cause, should have bewrayed so great weakness, as by insinuating a false charge of humor against the people, to have not only discovered their own pusillanimitie, but furnished the adversarie with so faire and plausible an advantage. But leaving them, in this point, to G. B's correction, and him also to his vain illusion, as if herein he had overcome a great part of our strength, The offence, that I fear, & prognostick from a compliance with this Accommodation, is quite of another nature, viz. that now, in this baksliding time, such a bad and influencing example may be of dangerous consequence to remove them from their stedfastness. And how tender of the soul concernment of the Brethren, and fearful of that wo, which even he who is the blessing of all Nations hath denounced against them, by whom offences come, every sincere Christ an ought in this point, to be, I hope all interested will seriously consider.

But now it is full time to conclude. And therefore I say, that seeing the termes of this Accommodation are ambiguous, defective and sinful, its designe and tendency most pernicious to the true Government of Gods House, and the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and its whole fabrick and frame, to the conviction of all discerning men, only forged out by necessity and Policy, and smoothed by delusion and hypocrisy, on purpose to catch a small remnant of the Lords faithful Ministers, witnesses against the present backslidings & thereby, if possible, for ever to suppress the restoring of the work of God in the Land, I judge it ought to be  
rejected

rejected as a vain ensnaring invention: So that, although the hatchers should be thereby wrathfully irritat, & this cockatrice egg should break out into a viper; yet better it be crushed for our suffering, then sinfully eaten to our death & destruction. The reproches of *ungovernable and unpeacable* may indeed be bitter unto ingenuous spirits, let be sincere lovers of the Prince of peace, and the persecution of men may possibly proceed to afflict and vex: But seeing that, through Sathan and the world their known enmity against the Lord and all his followers, these things are, in place of the opprobry, become rather the badge of truth, Only let our conversation be as becometh the Gospel, and let us stand fast in one spirit with one minde striving together for the pure ordinances of Gods house once given unto us, nothing terrified by our adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to us of salvation and that of God: for unto the faithful it is given in the behalfe of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. There is, I confesse, one temptation, which doth more speciously insinuate, and that is, the losse of the liberty of the Gospel, which men may possibly, in their displeasure, abridge or totally take from us: But as this solicitude is not more praise worthy, when devolved on our Lord and master, then subtilly deceitful, when its application is, *spare thy self*, So let none of these things move us, Neither let us reckon our lives dear unto our selves, so that we may finish our course with joy, and the Ministry, which we have received of the Lord Jesus. Let therefore truth, simplicity and godly sincerity be our main study, and faith & entire submission our only establishment, knowing, and on this resting, that not only his peace here shall be our portion and the end everlasting life: But that God can as easily of our ashes raise up Ministers to himselfe, as of stones Children to *Abraham*. And that he who hath glorified his name, will glorifie it again. AMEN.



# The Copy of two L E T T E R S,

Commonly reputed to have been written by the Bishop of DUM-  
BLANE, at least by him communicat to several Friends.

## The first Letter.

**S**IR, in the late Conference I had with your Friend, the sum of what I said was this.

1. That Episcopal - Government, managed in conjunction with Presbyters in Presbyteries and Synods, is not contrary either to the rule of Scripture, or the example of the primitive Church, but most agreeable to both.

2. Yea, it is not contrary to that very Covenant, which is pretended by so many as the maine, if not the only reason of their scrupling: And for their sakes it is necessary to adde this. For notwithstanding the many irregularities both in the matter and forme of that Covenant, and the illegal and violent wayes of pressing and prosecuting of it, yet to them who remain under the Conscience of its full force and obligation, and in that seem invincibly perswaded, it is certainly most pertinent, if it be true, to declare the consistence of the present Government even with that obligation. And as both these assertions, I believe upon the exactest (if impartial and impartial) inquirie, will be found to be in themselves true; so they are owned by the generality of the Presbyterians in England; as themselves have published their opinion in print under this Title, *Two Papers of proposals humbly presented to his Majestie by the Reverend Ministers of the Presbyterian perswasion, Printed at London Anno 1661.* Besides other passages in these Papers to the same purpose, Page 11, and 12. are these words, *And as these are our general ends and motives, so we are induced to insist upon the form of a Synodical Government, conjunct with a fixed Presidency or Episcopacy, for these reasons.*

„ 1. We have reason to believe that no other termes will be so generally agreed on, &c.

„ 2. It being agreeable to the Scripture & primitive Government, is likewise to be the way of a more universal concord, if ever the Churches on Earth arrive to such a blessing; However it will be most acceptable to God, and well informed Consciences.

„ 3. It will promote the practice of Discipline & Godliness without disorder, and promote order without hindering Discipline and Godliness.

„ 4. And it is not to be silenced (though in some respect we are loath to mention it) that it will save the Nation from the violation of their solemn vow and Covenant, without wronging the Church at all, or breaking any other Oath, &c. And a little after they add, that the Prelacie disclaimed in that Covenant, was the ingrossing of the sole Power of Ordination and Jurisdiction, & exercising of the whole Discipline absolutely by Bishops themselves and there Delegates, Chancellors, Surrogates, and Officials, &c. Excluding wholly the Pastors of Particular Churches from all share in it. And there is one of prime note amongst them, who, in a large Treatise of Church-Government, doth clearly evince, that this was the minde both of the Parliament of England, and of the Assemblie of Divines at *Westminster*, as they themselves did expressly declare it, in the admitting of the Covenant, That they understand it not to be against all Episcopacy, but only against the particular frame, as it is worded in the Article it selfe: For our principal model in England, and the way of managing of it, whatsoever is amisse (and it can be no wrong to make that supposition concerning any Church on Earth) or whatsoever they apprehend to be amisse, though it may be upon mistake, the Brethren that are dissatisfied, had possibly better acquitted their dutie by free admonitions and significations of their own sense in all things, then by leaving of their station, which is the one thing that hath made the breach (I fear) very hard to cure, and in humane appearance near to incurable: But there is much charity due to them, as following the dictat of their own Conscience; And they owe, and, I hope, pay the same back again to these that do the same in another way; & whatsoever may be the readiest & happiest way of reuniting those that are mutually so minded, the Lord reveal it to them in due time. This one word I shall add, That this difference should arise to so great a height, may seem somewhat strange to any man that calmly considers, that there is in this Church no change at all, neither in the Doctrine nor worship, no nor in the substance of the Discipline it selfe: But when it falls on matters easily inflamable, how little a spark, how great a fire will it kindle?

Because every one hath not the Book I have transcribed here Mr Baxter's own words. *Baxt. of Church-Government. 3. P. C. 1. P. 276.*

*An Episcopacy desireable for the Reformation and Peace of the Churches. A sixth President durante vita, P. 297. P. 330.* But some will say, *We are engaged against all Prelacie by Covenant; and therefore cannot yeeld to so much as you do without perjurie.* *Ans.* That this is utterly untrue, I thus demonstrate.

1. When that Covenant was presented to the Assemblie with the bare name of Prelacie joyned to Poperie, many grave and reverend Divines desired that the word Prelacie might be explained, because it was not all Episcopacie they were against, and thereupon the

the following concatenation in the Parenthesis was given by way of explication in these words. That is Church - Government by Arch - Bishops, Bishops, there Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans and Chapters, Arch - Deans, and all the other Ecclesiastical Officers depending on that Hyerarchie. By which it appears, that it was only the English Hierarchie, or frame that was covenanted against, and that which was then existent, that was taken down.

2. When the House of Lords took the Covenant, Mr Thomas Coleman, that gave it them, did so explain it, and professe that it was not their intent to Covenant against all Episcopacy, and upon this explication it was taken; and certainly the Parliament was most capable of giving the due sense of it, because it was they that did impose it.

3. And it could not be all Episcopacy that was excluded, because, a Parochial Episcopacy was at the same time used and approved commonly here in England.

4. And in Scotland they had used the help of visiters for the Reformation of their Churches, committing the care of a Countrey, or Circuit to some one man, which was as high a sort of Episcopacy, at least as any I am pleading for. Besides that they had Moderators in all their Synods, which were temporarie Bishops.

5. Also the chief Divines of the late Assemblies at Westminster, that recommended that Covenant to the Nations, have professed there own judgements for such a moderate Episcopacy as I am here defending, and therefore never intended the exclusion of this by Covenant.

After he adds, As we have Prelacie to bewar of, so we have the contrarie extream to avoid, and the Churches peace (if it may be) to procure; And as we must not take down the Ministry, least it prepare men for Episcopacie; so neither must we be against any profitable exercise of the Ministrie, or desirable order amongst them for fear of introducing Prelacy. Thus far Baxter's own words.

There is another that hath write a Treatise on purpose, & that zealous & strict enough, touching the obligation of the League and Covenant under the name of Theophilus Timorcius. And yet therein it is expressly asserted, that however, at first, it might appear, that the Parliament had renounced all Episcopacy, yet upon exacter inquirie, it was evident to the Author, that, that very scruple was made by some members in Parliament, and resolved (with the consent of their Brethren in Scotland) that the Covenant was only intended against Prelacie, as then it was in being in England, leaving a latitude for Episcopacy, &c.

It would be noted, that when that Covenant was framed, there was no Episcopacie at all in being in Scotland, but in England only; so that the extirpation of that frame only could then be meant and intended. Likewise it would be considered, that though there is in Scotland at present the name of Dean, and Chapter, and Commissaries, yet that none of those at all do exercise any part of the Discipline under that name, neither any other as Chancellor

or Surrogat &c. by delegation from Bishops; with a total exclusion of the community of Presbyters from all power and share in it, which is the great point of difference betwixt that model and this with us, and imports so much as to the main of Discipline. I do not deny, that the generality of the People, yea even of Ministers in *Scotland*, when they took the *Covenant* might likewise understand that Article, as against all Episcopacy whatsoever, even the most moderat, especially if it should be restored under the expresse name of Bishops and Archbishops, never considering how different the nature, and model, and way of exercising it may be, though under the same names, and that the due regulating of the thing is much more to be regarded, then either the retaining or altering of the name. But though they did not then consider any such thing, yet certainly it concerns them now to consider it, when it is represented to them, that not only the words of the Oath it selfe do very genuinely consist with such a qualified & distinctive sense, but that the very Composers or Imposers of it, or a considerable part of them, did so understand and intend it. And unless they make it appear, that the Episcopacy now in question with us in *Scotland* is either contrarie to the word, or to that mitigated sense of their own Oath, it would seem more suitable to Christian charitie & moderation, rather to yeeld to it as tolerable, at least, then to continue so inflexibly fast to their first mistakes and excessive zeal, as for love of it to divide from their Church, and break the bond of peace.

It may likewise be granted, that some learned men in *England*, who refused to take the *Covenant*, did possible except against that Article of it, as signifying the total renunciation and abolition of all Episcopacie; And seeing that was the real event and consequent of it, and they having many other strong and weightie reasons for refusing it, it is no wonder that they were little curious to enquire what past amongst the contrivers of it, and what distinction or different senses either the words of that Article might admit, or those contrivers might intend by them. And the truth is, that besides many other evils, the iniquitie and unhappines of such Oaths and Covenants lies much in this, that, being commonly framed by persons that, even amongst themselves, are not fully of one minde, but have there different opinions and interests to serve (and it was so even in this) they are commonly patched up of so many severall Articles & clauses, & those too of so versatile & ambiguous termes, that they prove most wretched snares, thickets of briars & thornes to the Consciences of those that are engaged in them, & matter of endless contentions & disputes amongst them about the true sense and intentment, & the tie & obligations of those doubtful clauses, especially in some such alterations & revolutions of affaires as alwayes may, & often do, even within

within fevv Years follovv after them; for the models and productions of fuch devices are not usually long Liv'd. And vvhatsoever may be said for their excuse in whole or in part, who, in yeeldance to the power that press'd it, and the general opinion of this Church at that time, did take that *Covenant* in the most moderate & least schismatical sense that the termes can admit; yet I know not what can be said to clear them of a very great sin, that not only framed such an engine, but violently imposed it upon all rankes of men, not Ministers & other publick persons only, but the whole bodie & community of the People, thereby ingaging such droves of poor ignorant persons, to they know not what, &, to speak freely, to such a hodge podge of various concernments, Religious and Civil, as Church-Discipline and Government, the Priviledges of Parliament and Liberties of Subjects, & condigne punishment of Malignants, things hard enough for the wisest and learnedest to draw the just lines of, and to give plain definitions and decisions of them, & therefore certainly as far off from the reach of poor countrey Peoples understanding, as from the true interest of their souls; & yet to tye them by a Religious and sacred Oath either to know all these, or to contend for them blindfold without knowing them, can there be instanced a greater oppression and tyrannie over Consciences then this? Certainly they that now governe in this Church cannot be charged with any thing near or like unto it; for whatsoever they require of intrants to the Ministrie, they require neither subscriptions nor Oaths of Ministers already entered, and far less of the whole bodie of the People; and it were ingenuously done to take some notice of any point of moderation, or whatsoever els is really commendable even in those we account our greatest enemies, & not to take any part in the World for the absolute Standard and unfailing rule of truth and righteousness in all things.

But oh who would not long for the shadowes of the evening, and to be at rest from all these poor childish trifling contests.

## POST-SCRIPT.

W<sup>H</sup>atsoever was the occasion of copying out the passages cited in this Paper, & of adding these few thoughts that then occurred touching that subject, I would have neither of them understode as intended any way to reflect upon or judge other Churches where this Government is otherwise exercised; but what is here said is only *argumentum ad hominem*, & Particularly adapted to the Persons, and notions, and scruples we have to do withal in this Church. And though this is designed to come to very few hands, yet I wish that what is here represented were by some better way brought to the notice of such as know least of it and need it most: that if it be possible, their extream fervor might be

somewhat allayed by this consideration, that this very form of Government, which is so hateful to them, is by the Presbyterians of the Neighbour Kingdome accounted a thing, not only tolerable, but desireable: And I might add, that, upon due enquiry, the reformed Churches abroad will be found in a great part much of the same opinion; Yea, I am not affrayed to say yet further, that I think there is good reason to believe, that it were not only Lawfull for these that now governe in this Church but, if prejudice hindered not, might prove expedient and useful for the good of the Church it self, that they did use in some instances a little more authoritie nor they do, and yet might still be very far off from proud and tyrannical domination, never applying their power to obstruct what is good, but to advance it, and not at all against the truth, but alwayes for it, and while they do so, the Atheisme and profaneness that abounds cannot reasonable be imputed to the nature of the Government, as too commonly it is by some, but rather to the schisme that is made by withdrawing and dividing from it: For there is not a greater enemy in the World to the power of Religion then the wranglings and bitter contentions that are caused about the external formes of it. *Εὐχὴ φιλὰ θεοῦ φιλὰ ἑαυτοῦ ἡμῶς κρατεῖται* as *Nazianzen* pathetically begins one of his orations for peace. I confess I have sometime wondered to see some wise and good men, after all that can be said to them, make so great reckoning of certain Metaphysical exceptions against some little words & formalities of difference in the Government, and set so little a value upon so great a thing as is the peace of the Church. Oh when shall the loud and harsh noises of our debates be turned to the sweeter sound of united prayers for this blessed peace, that we might cry with one heart and voice to the God of peace, who alone can give it, *Pacemteposcimus omnes*: and if we be real supplicants for it, we would beware of being the disappointers of our own desires, and of obstructing the blessing we pray for, and therefore would mainly study a temper receptive of it, and that is great meekness and charitie, and certainly whatsoever partie or opinion we follow in this matter, the badge by which we must be known to be followers of Jesus Christ is this, that we love one another, and that law unquestionably is of divine right, and therefore would not be broken by bitter passion and revilings, and rooted hatreds one against another for things about which the right is in dispute betwixt us; and however that be, are we Christians? Then doubtless the things wherein we agree are incomparably greater then these wherein we disagree, and therefore in all reason should be more powerful to unite us, then the other to divide us. But to restrain my selfe, and stop here, if we love both our own and the Churches peace, there be two things I conceive we should most carefully avoide, the bestowing of too great zeal upon small things, and too much confi-



fidence of opinion upon doubtful things: It is a mad thing to rush on hard and boldly in the darke, and we all know what kind of person it is of whom Solomon sayes, *That he rages and is confident.*

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## The second Letter.

**S**IR, The question betwixt us, is not concerning Bishops governing absolutely by themselves and their delegates, but concerning Bishops governing in conjunction with Presbyters in Presbyteries and Synods of which we affirme.

That it is neither contrary to the Scriptures, nor the example of the primitive Church, but must agreeable to both: If any think otherwise, let them produce their evidences of Scripture and antiquity. If they say, it is not enough to make such a forme lawful, that it is not contrary to Scripture, but there ought to be an expresse command or rule in Scripture to varrant it, they will sure be so just, as to be subject to the same Law themselves. Let them then produce such an expresse command or rule for their own model of Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods Provincial & National, and a commission of the Kirk in their several dependences and subordinations for the ordinary and constant government and exercise of discipline in the Church, and the necessary changing of the moderators in these meetings, excepting only that of the Kirk-session, wherein the Minister is constantly to moderate; for without such an expresse rule as this, a Bishop or fixed President may very well consist with that whole frame they contend for; And it is really and actually so at this present in this Church, and they stand so much the rather obliged to bring a clear command for these Judicatories, and their subordinations, because they affirme them to be of unquestionable divine right, and the very Kingdome of Christ upon earth, and the only lawful and absolutely necessary Government of the Christian Church, whereas the asserters of other forms do not usually speak so big. If they shall say, they are not against a fixed President or Bishop, or call him what you will (for to contest about names, especially in so grave a matter, is trivial and childish) but that the question is about their power, then we beg that it may be so. Let that be all the question betwixt us, and then we hope the controversie will be quickly ended; for we trust we shall be found not at all desirous to usurpe or effect any undue power, but rather to abate of that power which is reasonable and conforme even to primitive Episcopacie, then that a schisme should continue in this Church upon that score. But be it supposed, that Bishops do stretch their power somewhat beyond their line, let all the World judge, whether Ministers are for that

ingaged to leave their Station and vvithdrawv from those meetings of the Church, vvhich themselves approve of, for the exercise of Discipline, yea and (as many of them have done) to separate from the publick Worship, and vvhole communion of the Church, because of some degree of vvrong done them (as they think) in that point of povver, or vvether they had not sufficiently acquitted themselves, and discharged there Consciences by free declaring of their opinion concerning that matter, & modestly desiring the redress of it; & patiently waiting for it, though it be not presently redress'd, & continuing in the performance of their own duty to their power, though others above them, or about them, do transgress theirs, or seem at least to them to do so; otherwise if we think our selves obliged for every thing that is, or that vve judge faulty in other persons, or in the frame of things, to relinquish either the communion of it, or our station in it, vvhat vvill there be but endless svarmes of separations and divisions in any Church under the Sun.

But there is one thing in this business of ours that stickes after all the rest. The *Covenant*. As to that, waving all the irregularities of it, though so many and so great, that in the judgement of diverse, both wise and good men, they seem to annul the obligation of it, suppose it still to bind all that took it, and suppose likewise, that the present Episcopacy in this Church is that same that was abjured in that *Covenant*; yet the Article relating thereto obliges each one only to this, to endeavour within there calling and station, if such an Episcopacy shall be introduced and continued against their will. But the truth is, if men would have the patience to enquire into it, and consider the thing without prejudice and partialitie, this our Episcopacy will be found, not to be the same with that abjured in that *Covenant*: For that is the Government of Bishops and Archbishops absolutely by themselves and their Delegates, Chancellors, Archdeacons, Officials, &c. as it is exprest in the very words of the Article, and was on purpose so exprest, to difference that frame from other formes of Episcopacy, and particularlie from that which is exercised by Bishops jointly with Presbyters in Presbyteries and Synods, and that is it which is now used in this Church. And that the Presbyterians in England do generally take notice of this difference, and to that degree, as to account the one model contrary to the *Covenant*, and the other, not contrary to it, but very well agreeing with it, is a thing that none can deny, nor any that uses diligence to enquire can be ignorant of, for it is clear in diverse treatises extant in print. These things, to my best discerning, are truths; and if they be indeed so, I am sure are pertinent truths, toward the healing of our sad divisions; but if any like to be contentious, I wish I could say of this Church, we have no such custome: But this certainly may be said, that there is no custome doth more disedifie the Churches of God, and less become the followers of the Prince of peace. I shall only add on word which I am sure is undeniable, and I think is very considerable, that he that cannot joyne with the present frame of this Church, could not have lived in the communion of the Christian Church in the time of the first most famous General Assembly of it, the Council of Nice, yea (to go no higher up, though safely I might) he must as certainly have separated from the whole Catholick Church in the dayes of the holy Bishop and Martyr Cyprian upon this very scruple of the Government, as Novatim did upon another occasion.

An  
**A P P E N D I X**  
*In Answer to a Narrative of the Issue of the  
 Treaty anent Accommodation.*

**S**INCE the finishing of these sheets, I have seen a narrative of the last passage and issue of this Treatie for Accommodation, which again ingageth me to take my pen. And in this Discourse, the Author (and tis like one of the two, whom I have already rencountered) premising the Articles that we have heard, exhibireth the words, and manner of the Brethrens refusal to close therewith, and then resumeth the Accommodators their Arguments, concluding with a short additional reflection, upon both our *Covenants*.

And as for the first part, touching the Brethrens refusal and their declining to give in their reasons, or to debate the matter without an expresse command, I do neither contradict nor apologize. Only of this I am assured, that whatever influence, the manifold transgressions and mightie sins of the present times, the intractableness of adversaries, or the hopeles self-conceit of the party with whom they dealt, might have had upon their prudence to keep silence; yet neither can a cause, so righteous and evident, be therethrow justly prejudged, nor will the duty of a testimony, for God and his Truth in so cleare an exigent, be thereby satisfied.

The Arguments by the Author resumed, are little or nothing different from these, that I have already discussed, and when I come to re-examine them, I shall take them rather as they shall fall in then as they lye.

But seeing that both the strain of this Paper, and certain other grounds of conjecture, do probably insinuat, that the Accommodators, rather then to fail of a designe so advantageous, may possibly abate their termes, to the most taking condescendence, and make all the stress of the controversie, to fall upon the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a fixed *Preses*, it will not be amisse, that for the better defeating of this contrivance, we resume the *Question*; & supposing this President to be both eligible & deposible by the very meetings over which he presides, and vvaiving all other singularities, inquire a little more accurately into the nature of his office, and vvherein its differences from an ambulatory Moderator do precisely consist.

And first vve may observe in general, that although there be nothing more frequent in the mouths of our Opposits, then in the pursuance of their present purpose, to undervalue the difference inquired into, unto the almost nothing

of a formalitie, depending meerly upon the diversity of the periods of the two Moderators their duration; yet in other cases of the like nature, wherein they, or any persons els, do conceive themselves to be concerned, what contrarie contendings and reasonings doth a little interest elicit? I need not alledge particular instances, he who seriouſlie considereth, how that there is no Court, Society, or Incorporation so meen, whereof the Members, upon the alteration of their Priviledge, either by usurpation among themselves, or by extrinſeck imposing of others, from a chair-man freeſie elected during pleasure, unto a *Præſes* fixed *ad vitam*, would not complain of a great and material innovation, will in the matter of Courts institute by God and not by man, and that in order to things of an everlasting consequence, be easily satisfied, either of the delusion, or more hurtful designe of the former pretense; so that a man may well conclude that it is because, that neither the great Author, nor the principal ends of these meetings, are duly regarded, that therefore the Ordinances themselves, are accordingly slighted.

2. I observe, that the Origen and warrant of a Moderator in Church-meetings, is not from any particular positive Scripture-precept or rule given anent it; but being a thing by clear evidence, necessary for the concerne of order, and the right expeding of affaires, its immediate rise, comes to be referred to the common providence of reason, and is only *reductivè*, and in so far of divine institution, as the Courts whereunto the office belongeth, are founded upon that Authoritie, and do require this moderation, as an expedient needful to the right management of your business; which ground being in it self manifest, and such as may be exemplified in many other instances, and also fortified by apostolick practice, doth abundantly make out my assertion, and yet confirme the institution, with a sufficient *impress* of Gods appointment. Only it may be remembered, that whereever this rational necessity taketh place in divine ordinances, as its exigence is the precise measure and warrant of any thing thereby introduced; so if this limit be once slighted and transgressed, we not only tacitly impeach the holy and wise counsel of God, in ordering his own matters, but in effect cast open a door, to all that the weakness and wantonness of human invention, and carnal reason, shall please therein to devise: and how displeasing this is in Gods sight, and of what dangerous consequence, no serious christian needeth to be advertised.

3. I observe, that as there is a vast difference, betwixt the entrusting of a person with an employment, by a revocable mandat, and the vesting of him with a right and power, to exprese the same for terme of life; so it is in this, that the diversity of the fixed *Præſes*, and ambulatory Moderator, doth mainly stand. For clearing of which position, it may be considered, that

that seeing the distinction of right and dominion, from a precarious use, doth mostlie arise from, and it is valued by the certain continuance of the former, consequent to the nature of the thing, which in the later, subject to anothers arbitrarie interruption, is not to be found; how in the case of this Presidencie, *fixedness*, doth superinduce a kind of proprietie, to which the changeable Moderator can lay no claime, is very easy to be apprehended. He who by a permissive benevolence doth only enjoy for an uncertain season, may nevertheless have a very full and plenary use; but that this enjoyment is obnoxious to anothers pleasure, whereas that of right, the subject remaining, can only be terminat by the owners consent or deed, is the great disparitie, whereby not only these titles are in themselves distinguished, but from which, the power of a free disposal, peculiar to right, doth undoubtedly flow. Whence it may be further collected, that as the free civil abuse (so to speak) as well as the use, is founded in, and warranted by the nature of right, and the independencie from the will of any other, which it imports; so the fixedness of any power or office, doth certainlie in so far, notably capacitate the person therein stated, to a more free and incontrollable exercise. What difference Lawyers do make, *Inter eum qui jure suo, & illum qui beneficio tantum alieno jurisdictionem habet*, and what a latitude of power, is by them assigned to the former, which unto the second, for this very cause, they make incompetent, is not for one to dip further into, then may conduce for the illustration of common reason. Only, as he who is elected to an ordinary office of fixed Presidencie *ad vitam*, may well and truly be said, to be *jure suo Praeses*, whereas the other, who is thereto chosen by a commission, as it were, during pleasure, and no longer, doth by the same rule *alieno tantum beneficio praesidere*; so, that this *fixedness*, imported by the *jus suum*, arising from the investiture of the office, doth considerably advance the *Episcopus Praeses*, and discriminat him from a Moderator, nominat only during pleasure, and absolutly depending upon the *beneplacitum* of his constituents, needeth no further explication.

I have hitherto for avoiding confusion, opposed to the fixed *Praeses* a Moderator appointed simpliciter during pleasure, if any man think that this doth not so exactlie quadrat to our custome, where by our moderators were chosen, for a definit space, & that by this certain designation he appeareth not to be much different from him that is ordained for time of life. It is answered, it is not the simple omission, or adjection of a certain space, that is to be regarded in this matter, a person may be commissionat, not only indefinitely, but also with the expression of a prefixed time, and yet in both cases meerlie during pleasure, just as in a precarious concession, which though it may be qualified with the convention of a certain terme, yet Lawyers say, it is of no

force to restrain the granters revocation; but the true point of the difference, doth plainly stand in this, that the office of presidency once being declared to be fixed, and so made a right of its own nature, not otherwise terminable, then with the *Præses* his life, as his continuance therein, is from the nature of his right, and cannot be understood to flow merely from the electors their free pleasure, like to the case of a trust committed by simple mandat; so he is no more obnoxious to their revocation, than any other person, having a grant from a community of an ordinary superior office during his life, can be turned out of it, at the granters arbitrement; whereas, on the other hand, there being no such constant office established, the person called simply to officiate, whether indefinitely or for a set time, attaineth to no right, but the same remaineth entirely with the meeting electing, and he is absolutely subjected to their determination. By which also it further appears, and may conduce for the better uptaking of this distinction, that as in this second case, the right abides with the presbyterie, and the naked exercise of moderation, is intrusted to the person thereto appointed; so in the former, the erecting of this presidency, unto an ordinary fixed office, is without question a manifest derogation from, and abridgment of, the Presbyteries antecedent privilege, so that in summe, it may be certainly and evidently concluded, that as the erecting of a superior office, by a perpetual constitution, and thereby retringing the constituents their original power, and making to the person therewith invested, a proper right, notwithstanding that the actual nomination and election of persons to that office, may still remain with them, doth clearly and exceedingly differ, from a commission given by way of mandat (though for the exercise of the same employment,) whether indefinitely, or for a certain space, neither diminishing the mandators their inherent power, nor granting to the person commissioner, any certain right; so the offices of the constant *Prosses*, and the Presbyterian Moderator, are by the same methods and rules, as remotely distinguished.

If it be further objected, That I seeme to forget, that even the fixed *Præses*, is not accountable, but may be removed upon his delinquency, and that *ad vitam*, which doth much impair the difference here assigned, I shall not, in answering, divert my Reader to the doubt, whether this *Præses* may be removed from his presidency upon peculiar and lesser faults, not inferring a remove from his ministry, or whether, according to the perpetual custome in this case, these deprivations are not to be divided, which certainly contributeth much to the *Præses* his establishment. But seeing the common & notore distinction of an appointment *ad vitam* or *culpam*, or only, *durante beneplacito*, doth sufficiently insinuate the solution, it is obvious, that though



an ordinary office given *ad vitam*, may according to the evident rules of right and reason (which do in no case permit the same to be absolute, or exempt it from all control) be taken away, upon a just ground of forfeiture, duly tryed and proven; yet the disparity of a commission, given merely *ad beneplacitum*, and revocable at pleasure, without so much as the necessity of alledging a reason, is abundantly manifest, and plainly establisheth the distinction now in agitation; and in a word, to be removeable from a trust *ad libitum*, and depofible from a right only, *pro culpa*, are so sensibly different, that the objection doth not deserve any further answer. Only, that the influence thereof upon practice, or upon the right or wrong management of affaires, may be the better apprehended, it would be considered, that almost in every trust and employment, let be in this which we treat of, there are, below that excess of malversation, which can be charged and proven to be a fault to conclude a removal, a great many inferior degrees of mal-administration, which though by reason of their quality, they do not amount to a just cause of rejection, yet may nevertheless be of singular prejudice, and just as a free election doth deliberate upon proper and improper, so may these smaller transgressions, very rationally require a charge, without meriting deposition. Whence it easily follows, that beside the diminution of the Presbyteries power and privilege, this fixed *Proeflos*, doth also impose upon them, an inconvenient restriction of their just liberty of change, which in many cases may prove singularly prejudicial.

4. I observe, That as the fixed *Præses* is constitute, not by an arbitrary mandat, but by a proper right, resulting from the erection of the office, in the manner that I have described; so the office it self, consisting in a priority of direction and conduct, it certainly thereunto addeth a peculiar dignity. I say the office consisting in a priority of direction; for that there are subaltern offices, such as that of a *Clark* or *Recorder*, which may be fixed, and enjoyed by a proper right, and have also the general esteem of praise worthy employments, and yet do not intitle to any eminency, is sufficiently explained, and its difficultie removed out of my way, by the simple proposal. But the thing here remarked, and wherein the difference of the *Proeflos* and Presbyterian Moderator is further apparent, is, that the former hath by virtue of his right of presidencie a concomitant special honour above his Brethren, which cannot be denied to him, without a gross selfishness in prelatick herauldrie. The temporary Moderator is indeed attended by an agreeable respect; but as he is vested with no proper right to the place, wherein he supplie officers, by the Assemblies free nomination, and as its instrument and mouth, which during pleasure, it chooseth for the more orderlie management of its affaires; so the estimation and honor that accom-

panieth the employment, is of no higher degree, and equally transient; whereas the fixed *Praefes*, being rather set up to be a head for Governing the assembly and its actions, mult of necessitie on this account, be adorned with a more high and permanent dignitie.

But it may be objected, that it is an easie matter to represent the controverted *Praefes* in as diminishing characters, and by saying, that he simple officiats, at least enters unto the office by the free vote of the meeting, and as its mouth, and not its head, by them thereto elected for time of life, to resolve all the difference of the two, and this eminencie of respect appropriat to the fixed, unto the bare specialitie of the distinct period set to his continuance, and no doubt words are easily turned; but as it must be acknowledged, that these things, viz. for one to be set, though by a free suffrage, in a place formed and erected in an ordinarie office, with its known special powers and privileges, and to possess by the right thence resulting; and to be intrusted with the same employment, but only by the way of a free and revocable mandat and commission, absolutely depending at the constituents pleasure, are widely distant; so, particular distinguishing qualities of the *Proeflos*, in his proper right and power, his exemption from an arbitrary removal, and his more advanced dignity, are thereby notablie declared. And therefore, seeing he doth injoy his place *jure suo*, (as Lawyers speak) and doth not precariously hang for the continuance of its exercise, upon the Presbyteries free and simple goodwill, as our changeable Moderators do, he cannot in this respect be said to be only an instrument for order, dignified with no higher esteem, but is in effect by virtue of his right, and the power thereto pertaining, rendered the chief and head, and accompanied with a peculiar honor inseparable from such a Superiority.

If it be further alledged, that even in our own custome, the Moderator once elected did alwayes continue out his course, and that it is not so easie to give one instance of this arbitrary putting off, here so much spoken of; I shall not answer, that his time being short, and not *ad vitam*, there could scarce be any necessitie for making of such changes: But the truth is, the not making thereof is so far from impugning, that it much commends the differences by me explained; for if the quality of the office, as by us used, the certain time thereto appointed, and the Presbyteries reserve of an absolute control, have been of that efficacie, as even to prevent the occasions of exercising this last privilege, no doubt it is more concludent in our behalf, then if the Presbyteries had made many removes. It is not therefore, as I said before, the electing and designing for a certain space, and a not altering observance, that do signifie any thing in this affaire; no, but as the Presbyteries retaining of the absolute power over their Moderator, is both their privilege

viledge by the Lords appointment; and also the great check of all abuses, incident through his weakness or malice; so it is the setting up of a *Præses* over them, with a power appertaining to him, as his proper right during life, and not committed to him by a revocable mandat, that not only elevats the *Episcopus Præses* to his distinguishing Superiority and Dignity, but in effect, contains the seminal cause of molt of the evils that have thereon ensued.

Now from these things thus explained, the differences of the fixed *Præses* from our Moderator, appeare manifestly to be. 1. That the former imports an ordinary settled office, including a proper right, and power to the person thereto appointed; whereas the later doth only imply a bare exercise, wholly dependent upon the Presbyteries pleasure. 2. That the setting up of the first, doth derogat from the Presbyteries right, by transferring it upon him; whereas after the nomination of the second, the Presbyteries right remaineth still entire, and neither is, nor can be impaired by the intrusting of a particular Member with its meer actual exercise. 3. The fixed *Præses* deprives the Presbytery of a great measure of their libertie, he being exempted from their arbitrarie control and power of changing; whereas our Moderator is altogether obnoxious to their determination. 4. The fixed *Præses* is created by a deed conveying a right; whereas our Moderator is made by simple mandat, imparting nothing, save a precarious trust. 5. If an allusion may adde light, the *Præses* is set up as it were to be Head; whereas the Moderator is in a manner only appointed to be the Mouth of the meeting. 6. The *Præses* his right and power and Superioritie, do necessarilie attribute unto him a special eminency of dignity; whereas our Moderator, his naked ministerial exercise, cannot pretend to any higher respect. And 7. The *Præses* from the nature of his right, continueth *ad vitam* or *ad culpam*; whereas the Moderator, having no right, hath no other assurance or lace, then the Presbyteries *beneplacitum*.

These differences then (though among themselves rather formally then really distinct) holding out the proper characteristics of the *Proæstos* contended for, as indeed they are, and must necessarily be admitted by all, before I fall to disprove him by further reasoning, it will not be amiss, that for the better clearing of what singular moment these his signal advantages, above our Moderator, may be in the matters wherein they are conversant, I shortly note the several parts of the office. And 1. It is the Moderators part, to propose matters to be considered. 2. To direct consultations. 3. To moderate debates. 4. To interrogat opinions. 5. To ask the votes. 6. To determine in the case of equality, by his casting suffrage. 7. To appoint extraordinary dyets: Which being all certain beyond controversy, I only

wish that the true value of their influence, may be as gravely pondered in the present question for guarding against any exorbitant power, whereby in these spiritual Courts and matters, they have often, been and may be still very dangerously abused and depraved, as we see men in their worldly concerns seriously attend to the things not only of the like, but of a far inferior consequence.

Having thus delineate the proprieties of this *Episcopus Prasfes*, as I suppose with a satisfying perspicuity, what clearing it may give to the main inquirie, concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of this place and office, falls next under consideration.

And in answer thereto, I distinctly affirme, that the place and office of a fixed *Prasfes*, or constant Moderator, is unwarrantable, and positivie unlawful. Which assertion, seeing it importeth the plain contradiction of my Author's first consideration, *viz. that there is no command in scripture, for changing of Moderators in meetings of Presbyteries, nor no precept, nor rule of Scripture, contrary to the office of a Bishop, as a fixed President in Synods*, the confutation thereof, will be the best confirmation of my position.

Only I must premise, that seeing the Author proposeth the two Members of his consideration, as if in effect coincident, and that, if there be a precept in Scripture, contrarie to the office of a Bishop as a fixed *Prasfes*, the necessitie of a change of Moderators, doth from the acknowledged exigence of order necessarily ensue, his insinuat demand of a precept in Scripture for changing of Moderators, as well as of a rule, contrarie to the office of a fixed President, is captiously superfluous. Holding me therefore to that part, that there are precepts and rules in Scripture, contrarie to the office of a Bishop, as a fixed President, the grounds that in my former Discourse I have thence adduced, to prove the absolute and lowly paritie, commanded by our Lord to his Apostles, and all succeeding Ministers, if they do stand firme, do undoubtedly evince it: For seeing that our Author doth in his third consideration, use it as a main Argument, *That there is no particular command for an absolute paritie of Presbyters*, adding, *If it be, let it be produced, and it will end the controversie*, It is as evident from his concession, as from the unquestionable opposition of an exact paritie, and the majority of this office of Presidencie, that by the establishing of the first, the second is subverted. Now that our Lord hath commanded an absolute paritie of Presbyters, If I make it appear from the original precepts, given to the Apostles, without controversie not only the Antecessors of all succeeding Presbyters, in their ordinarie ministrie, but the persons to whom, as representing the perpetual ministrie, ordained by Christ in his Church, the Rules and directions there-to proper were delivered, I hope the transferring of the command, from  
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the Apostles to succeeding Presbyters, will be of no difficulty. Let us then in this search after the Lords will in this matter, humbly and meekly consider what he himself hath therein delivered. And as, for my own part, I am very far removed from the temptations of interest, that commonly do sway and overway in it; so I am confident, that all men equally removed from the passions and prejudices thence arising, will in this divine light, find a most assured determination.

Our Lord then having upon several occasions, particularly that reasoning *τις ἂν ἦν μείζων αὐτῶν*, which of them should be greatest, and the suite of a *Proedria*, or a prerogative - seat presented by Zebedees two Sons, and their Mother, dehorted the twelve from all affectation of more eminent authoritie or dignitie among themselves, not only by reducing them to the *μικρολογία*, and innocent simplicity of children, and proposing to them the example of his own lowliness and humilitie, both in his personal deportment, and in the manner of his administration, but also by removing the very subject it self, and warning them, that they ought to be so far from looking after any Superioritie of Rule or Authoritie, one over another, that the greatness of the greatest, was to be Servant of all, and industrie and humilitie, their praise and exaltation. He telleth them further, that as he alone was their Master, so all they were Brethren; and accordingly we find them all equally commisionat to the work of the ministrie, *Math.* 28. 19. alike vested with the power of Discipline, *Iohn.* 20. 23. and in this paritie acting, officiating and associating others to themselves, in several undeniable instances. These things being evident in the Gospel records, verily when I reflect upon them, I cannot but marvel, what it is, that can here be desiderat. The Disciples contend who shall be greatest, and our Lords answer is, *If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all: and that the least among them, the same should be great:* By which, as it is clearly intimar, that the greatness which they aspired unto, was none other then a primacy or prefidency of one above his fellows; so it is manifest, that our Lord doth not in his return so much condemn their ambition, as by a total remove of all greatness, the subject of the competition, and converting their contest for grandeur, into an emulation of lowliness and diligence, fairly confute it. I grant, that according to their more rude & carnal apprehension of our Lords Kingdome, the time of this debate, it is very likely, that it was incited & managed by agreeable passions and phansies; but yet seeing he doth not plainly direct his return, to undeceive them of that delusion, but rather carrieth his command further, to informe their judgments, and forme there mind, by an instruction futed to the true work & station wherein he was to leave them; that, even in that they were to look after no stated Primacy or Majority, but consequently to re-

main, and demean themselves therein, in an absolute paritie, is the most obvious import of his precept.

Another passage is that of the two Brether, who desire to sit before, and to be advanced above the rest, and thereupon occasion the displeasure of the other ten. And hereupon our Lord, after having endeavoured to purifie their carnal aspirings, unto the humble and heavenly expectation of the glory to be revealed, calls the twelve, and saith unto them, *Tee know, that the Princes of the Gentiles, exercise Lordship and Authority upon them*, *καὶ οὕτως ἐστὶν ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, Math. 20. 25. *οὐ καὶ οὕτως ἐστὶν ὡς ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, Luc. 22. 2. But so shall it not be among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister *ἢ ὡς ὑμῶν Δούλων*, and whosoever will be chief (*αὐτῶν*) among you, let him be your Servant, *ἢ ὡς ὑμῶν Δούλων*. What do we think? Is it the place of Gentile Princes; or Magistracy that our Lord here dischargeth? No, the contrarie is most certain: Or is it simplie pride, that he would hide from the Disciples? Neither do the words rest there: But the thing evidently held forth is, that as the nature of their employment, being a most lowly and assiduous ministrie, consisting in spiritual ministrations, for the like ends, did not admit of that superior eminency, or coactive authoritie accompanying civil powers; so they were not to aime at, or owne any other preference or dignitie, then what the praise of a faithful Minister or Servant, in all humilitie and industrie might adde unto them: By which, seeing our Lord doth certainly reprove the two Brothers, their foolish desire of a *Proedria*, and vain promotion above the ten, & the ten their no less ambitious indignation, & envy against them, that thereby the fixed Presidencie, whereof this is an inseparable proprietie, is condemned, cannot in the least be questioned. But why do I obscure the light by my shaddowy glosses? Let us suppose the case, that the two Brothers, more intelligent of what was to be the Apostles their office and condition, had distinctlie proponed their desire, that they might be the fixed Presbyters over the rest in all Church-assemblies; and what from our Lords Words impartially pondered, every mans conscience doth singlie suggest would have been his answers, I vwillingly put the plea upon the issue of that verdict. Or to descend the supposition, and render the case yet more plain, let us figure it thus, a Prince chooseth a company in order to some peace of special service, vvhich he commits unto them; of these elected, two presume to desire that they might sit and have a prerogative above the rest; whereunto the Prince answereth, that indeed in other companies and courts, by him erected, there were some one or other, that had the constant presidency, with a corresponding degree of eminencie above their fellowes, but it should not be so among them, but whosoever would be great among them should be their Minister, and whosoever would be chief, should be their Servant:

And



And if any man can think, that notwithstanding of this answer, and dehortation verie exactlie parallel, either the companie might elect, or any among them accept to be a fixed President, without transgressing the institution, it is more then I can possibly conceive.

But the third place above hinted at, viz. our Lords censure of the Scribes & Pharisees their vanity in loving the uppermost roomes at feasts, and the chief seats *ὡς αὐτοὶ ἐξεδίπνουν* in the Synagogues, and to be called of men Rabbi, Rabbi, with the dehortation to the twelve, *be not yee called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ*, and all ye are Brethren, doth not a little adde to the preceeding testimonies; in as much as it is evident, that as our Lord doth reprove the aspiring pride of the Pharisees, to these honors that were customarie among the Jewes, & in themselves only due to a proportional merite; so the better to secure the Apostles, from the motions of the like corruption, he further instructs them of the equality of their condition, that was not so much as capable of these distinctions, which though they might have been among the Jewes lawful, were by the Pharisees unlawfully asserted; whence it is certain, that our Lord doth no more allowe an imparitie among his Apostles and Ministers, then it is possible to imagine it among Brethren, where there is no pretense of primogeniture.

As to what remains, that the Apostles were equally commissionat, and impowered to the discharge of their ministrie, and in this paritie, did act, officiat and associat others to themselves; let their commissions given by our Lord, be considered, and their practice, either in their joint acting among themselves, or with other Pastors and Presbyters, such as the Apostolical meetings mentioned in the *Acts*, the manner of the Presbyterie at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas their joint ordaining of Elders in the Churches of their plantation, Paul's joint laying on of hands, together with the Presbyterie, Peter's terming of himself a fellow - Presbyter with the elders to whom he writes, John's censure of Diotrephes his asserting of preheminance, Paul's repressing of these divisions and sects like to arise among the *Corinthians*, through their laying claim to their severall instructors, by an humbling adequation of himself and *Cephas & Apollos*, in that one degree of Ministers by whom they beleaved, and many other the like arguments be pretended, and the thing will be very easily acknowledged.

By all which it is clear and certain, that this fixed *Prostasia*, importing to the *Præses*, a superior distinguishing right, power and preheminance above his fellow-Ministers and Presbyters, as I have declared, and for which the Author doth not so much as pretend to our Lords positive institution, is in effect directly contrarie to the Gospel - rules and injunctions, and to Apostolick practices, and manifestly introductive of a vain imparitie. there with altogether inconsistent.

But here our Author reclaimeth, and in his fourth consideration saith, *That this parity cannot be concluded from our Saviour's command*, It shall not be so with you, nor any other of his holy injunctions of moderation, humility and meekness; for that would destroy all Church-government, and all Superiority of Pastors, over other Elders and Deacons, and over their People; If all imparitie of Rule in Ecclesiastick Persons, were inconsistent with these great Laws of our holy profession, the Apostles themselves, would have been the first most signal transgressors. It is answered; If from the Text, *It shall not be so with you*, I were contending for an absolute parity, in all respects, among all Church-officers and Members, in as much as thereby all their distinction, with the whole oversight of Pastors, should be taken away, without doubt the objection would be unanswerably concludent; but seeing the divisions of Church-officers in extraordinarie and ordinarie, and of the ordinarie, in Pastors, Elders and Deacons, with the imparity thence resulting, is not so much as by us questioned, the laxeness of such arguing doth merite a more severe censure, then at present I am inclined to use. It is therefore to be considered, that as the severall powers, offices and gifts, by our Lord institute in, and given unto his Church, with their beautiful order and subordination, are by us very chearfully acknowledged, and no constructive imparitie, that may be thence inferred, in the least doubted; so neither is the same a proper imparity, a thing only incident to Officers of the same kind; Nor (if it were) is it the imparitie at present under debate, vvhich being an imparitie of place, or other the like priviledge, attribute to one, exclusive of others of the same order, is the only subject of the controversie: Which standing thus in plain termes, vvhether or not our Lord, by appointing his Apostles, and their successors the Ministers of the Gospel, in the same equalitie of power, as Brethren, and quelling all there competitions about the majority and preference, by reducing them to the lowe degree of Servants, without any distinction, except what may arise from a greater measure of humility and diligence, hath thereby discharged all imparitie of power and prescience among them: I am confident, that not only the simple proposall doth conclude the affirmative, but render the absurditie here objected against it widely impotent.

I say then, for a distinct answer. 1. That the parity by us pleaded, is not indeed to be concluded from any of our Lords holy injunctions of Moderation, humilitie and meekness; to insinuat the contrarie to be our assertion, is not only a plain calumnie, seeing all men know, that the highest as well as the lowest of men, constitute in lavvful degrees, are liable to these sacred instructions, but also a desingenuous artifice, to make it be thought, that we take the command, *it shall not be so among you*, for a meer precept of

that kind, and thereby surrender one of our main arguments; in as much, as it is rather from the intimation it contains of the Apostles their future condition, then from any precept of humilitie that may be thence inferred, that it strongly concludeth my position.

2. Although the command, *It shall not be so among you*, doth not prohibit the different orders and degrees of Church-officers, whether extraordinary or ordinarie of our Lords appointment, which both manifest reason, and the genuine import of the antithesis do plainly evince; yet that all that superior eminencie and coactive authoritie, whereby the Princes, and great ones of the earth, are properlie from others distinguished, is here removed from Church-administrations, and Lordlie Prelacie, with all its priviledges and dignities, thereby discharged, is obvious to the meanest capacity.

3. As these words, *It shall not be so among you*, do in the first place clear the nature and manner of ecclesiastick, in opposition to secular rule; So it is from the ensuring ampliation, *but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister &c.* that consistentlie with the former declaration, the paritie by us pleaded, of officers in the same order, & all imparitie whatsoever among Church-officers, resulting meerly from a greater eminencie of place and dignity, is utterly excluded. I say, resulting meerly from a greater eminencie &c. For that Apostles & Evangelists, in respect of their extraordinary qualities and employments, and Pastors and ruling Elders, in respect of their different charges, are stated in a kind of imparitie, is not at all controverted; but the question being plainly concerning the lawfulness of an imparitie not from any special power, trust or gift given by our Lord, but from an higher place and dignitie, having no other foundation, then a greater measure, and larger interest in the Government conferred by man, upon the person therewith vested, I affirme, that not only among officers of the same kind and order, but among all Church-officers whatsoever, this is an imparitie of rule, in ecclesiastick persons, as little countenanced by the superiority of Pastors over other Elders and deacons, and the whole flock, or by the Apostles their practice, as our Lords discourse and command to the twelve, upon the sute of the brothers, doth certainly condemne that *Proedrie* whereunto they pretended.

As for our Authors anticipation, viz. that to say the Apostles were extraordinary persons, would upon the supposition of their imparity in the point of rule, say nothing, but that they were extraordinary transgressors, it is like many other his mistakes, wherein the glances of an inconsiderat phansie, do very visiblie preoccupy his judgment; for seeing the imparitie which our Lord doth condemne and we do disown, is an imparitie consisting in the inequality of place and dignity, in one and the same order, and not that imparitie, which

arise from an extraordinarie office, power or gift of our Lords ordaining, it is evident that the imparitie of the Apostles, extraordinarie officers, compared with ordinarie Presbyters, doth not in the least contradict; and that the Author, by imagining the answer, of their being extraordinarie persons, to import no more then that they were extraordinarie transgressors, doth only shew his extraordinarie inadvertence. And really when I consider, that notwithstanding the different orders of offices, which Christ hath ordained in the Church, he hath nevertheless most expressly stated his Apostles, and in their persons all succeeding Pastors, in an exact equalitie, and clearly discharged all pretensions, to any sort of majoritie, or preference among them, and that even our adversaries themselves, do not maintain their *Episcopopus Praeses*, by any claim of succession to these superior officers, at first by our Lord institute, I do not only wonder, to find my Author in this objection so foolishly and rawly confounding the imparitie of place and preheminence, in one and the same order, by us from Gods word rejected, with the imparitie of orders by the Lord established, but am fully of the opinion, that the more eminent degree of a fixed President is yet more unreasonable, then the distinct order of superior prelates, although in the seeming acknowledgment of our very adversaries, delitute of all satisfying pretences.

For as much then as our Lord, had very clearly and positively commanded the paritie of his Apostles, and in them, of all his Ministers, by declaring them to be *Brethren*, in direct opposition to that pharisaick pride, which might have tempted them to the like affectation, and further, doth adduce his own blessed example, that by the consideration of his Ministerial lowliness, in the manner both of his administration and conversation, compared with the infinit excellency of his person, power and dignitie, he might the more effectually obviate all imaginable temptations, & utterly ruine the very thoughts of any inequality of a stated superioritie amongst them; let us with all fear, and reverence, acknowledge his holy wisdom and appointment, and constantly disown and reject the vanitie of all contrary inventions, specially, seeing it is most certain, that however men may endeavour by specious pretexts to obscure the prohibition, and to palliate this corruption, yet its wicked, pernicious and abominable effects and consequences, have rendered it, to all the sincere lovers of our Lord Jesus, palpably odious.

That which doth next occur, is two objections in the Authors second and seventh consideration. The one, That the fixed presidency of Bishops in Synods, hath as much warrant as the fixed moderating of a Presbyter, in a Kirk-session of ruling Elders; The other, That it can as little be quarreled, for want of an express command in Scripture, as Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and National assemblies.

bles, and their Commissions, which with their severall subordination, are nevertheless by us pretended to be of divine institution. But having in the former Treatise, by shewing the Scriptural, and most rational disparitie of the first case, and the undeniable grounds of divine right and institution for the second, fully answered all that is here excepted, I will not now detain my Reader, by any superfluous repetition or addition.

The fift thing asserted by the Author, is, *that if the thing itself be lawful, the appropriating of the name of Bishop, to the superior Presbyter, cannot make it unlawful, though these two names be indifferently used in the scripture*. Thus the Author loves to quible. We say, that not only these two names, are indifferently used in Scripture, but that they are used as signifying one and the same thing, without the least insinuation of a more proper application, either of the one or the other, to any thing distinct; & thence do strongly inferre, that after-times did verie unwarrantably and contrarie to Scripture-grounds, divide both the things and names: And this our Author, doth very lightly turn over, as if all the question anent a divine warrant for the identity or distinction of Bishops and Presbyter were only a plea of words; and whether the names of Bishop and Presbyter, in Scripture commonlie and promiscuously used, might lawfully afterwards be severally appropriat, without the least notice taken, that in Scripture the use of the words is no more common, then the thing the same; and that therefore the separation afterwards made, was a meer human invention. But he adds for a reason, *that the names are in the same manner used in some primitive writers, who in other passages do clearly owne the different degree of Bishops over Presbyters, and were themselves of that degree*. What then? A man may indeed hence conclude, that in the times succeeding the purest, with the distinction introduced of a superior Bishop over a Presbyter, the names, beside their common use, became to be usurped to peculiar significations; but seeing this manner of writing, observed in these primitive writters, doth no wayes hold in sacred write, whence we ought to search for our warrant, and wherein there is no passage which doth in the least favour the different degree of Bishops over presbyters, what can be gathered from these indigested reflectious, save this, that the primitive times soon varied from the primitive simplicitie, and consequently swerved from the primitive purity. Seeing then, that all the weakness of this argument, is from the Author his own mistake, to take notice of his attempt, to baffle the reasoning from this Topick, *as too weak and unworthy of any serious persons insisting upon it*, were in effect, to be ridiculously serious in his follies.

But he proceeds to tell us in his sixt assertion, *That it is yet more strange to be offended, with the solempne way of blessing, or consecrating Bishops, to that presi-*

dency with the imposition of hands ; as if a grave and solemn admission , to a high and holy employment , were apt to unhallow it , and being in appearance so proper an instrument , of making it the better , should yet effectually make it the worse. How the Author comes to terme it strange , yea more strange , that we should be offended with a practice , which yet , for all his surprisall , by reason of our offence , he himself dar not distinctly avow , might be to us really so , were it not that our experience of his methods , doth abundantly satisfie us , that all the arts of insinuation are familiar unto him. The thing he here points at , is without doubt to justifie the peculiar ordination of his Bishop , or *Episcopus Praeses* , knowing , that a distinct ordination , doth certainly require and inferre , things altogether inconsistent with his discription of his *Episcopus Praeses* , he therefore endeavours to smoothe it over , as if all considerable in the case , were only a more solemn way of blessing , or consecrating of Bishops to their Presidencie. But not to stand with him upon the matter of words , the things that we are indeed offended at , are. 1. That where in his Episcopal consecration , both the words , manner and whole forme of a special ordination are most exactly used , yet he would have us to believe , that all transacted by this performance , is only a more solemn benediction ; if any man inquire the Difference ; that more solemn lawful action , if capable of a solemn benediction , is known and obvious ; whereas , although Ordination be accompanied with benediction , yet both the notation of the word , and reason it self do plainly intimar , that it is not formally a benediction , but that its principal act , as it is performed by men , is a Ministerial conferring in the name , person and Authority of Jesus Christ , of a special Church-office , and consequently , that it supposeth aswell the office it self , as the manner of its conveyance , to depend upon our Lords institution , and warrant : Whereby it is evident , that either this place of presidencie , being only a humane contrivance , upon the pretence of order of a superior eminencie , for the better conduct of common administration , cannot at all bear or admit of it , or that under the proposal of this presidencie , it is in effect , not only a higher degree , but a higher order of Church - officers , that is intended to be introduced : Which how pernicious it hath proven , and may yet again prove to the Church of Christ , both the proud usurpations of Prelacie , & the heights of Papacie , do sufficiently testifie.

But the second thing that offends us is , that admitting the thing were really performed by way of a solemn blessing , in the manner represented ; yet seeing this presidency , being repugnant to our Lords command , is not an holy , but an unhallowed employment , any form of benediction , that can be thereto used , is not only destitute of any promise , but a profanation of the holiness of God , which he jealously loveth. We do not therefore condemn this



this conservation, as if vve judged, that a grave and solemn admission, to a high and holy employment, were apt to unhallow it; no, this alledgeance doth too grossely and calumnioussly beg the question. But seeing it is certain, that the Author will as soon prove gain to be godlines, as he will rationally perswade that this high employment is holy, it is evident, that his grave and solemn admission, is as little apt to hallow it, or to be a proper instrument of making it better, as the consecration of the high places was of old, when they were commanded to be destroyed, in it self allowvable, or unto the Lord acceptable.

The next thing we meet with is, *That the degree or power of Bishops, beyond other Presbyters, is certainly, not to be so fully measured by any other rule, as by the receaved practice of the primitive Church, and canons of the most ancient Councils.* Very right; why should not their origen and warrant, and the measure and rule of their power go together? But seeing we have found this primitive practice, to be dissonant from, and contrarie to the truth and simplicitie of the Gospel, the first and chief rule, the Author must pardon us, in this matter, to disown both his rule and measures, and to hold us to this only unerring canon; yet seeing he hath been pleased in his deep ingenuity to acquaint us with that, wherein we account our selves but little concerned, it will not be amiss, that for our warning we take particular notice of the discovery: He adds then, *That by the forementioned practice and canons, it will undoubtedly be found that they had not only some such particular power* (as what, I know not) *but exortem & eminentem potestatem*, as Hierom speaks: A man might hitherto have thought, that if not all, yet the main thing acclaimed by the Author to his *Episcopus Praeses*, was a power of constant Moderation in Church meetings: But here, lest (as I apprehend) he should frustrat his solemn consecration, or rather the special ordination, which he hath just now asserted, he deals a great deal more plainly, and tels us, not only in general of such a measure of power, as may be gathered from primitive practice, and ancient canons, which certainlie may be as large, as the most favourable conjecture, from any probable pretence of either of these within the first three or four centuries of the declination of the primeve puritie, pleaseth to form it; but that by these same rules, beside a certain particular povver, vvhich he doth not specifie, they should have *potestatem exortem & eminentem*, and this no doubt, in a congruous enough construction of the frequent hyperbolies used by the fathers on this subject, may arise as high as either ambition or interest shall please to toscrue it. This being then the ambiguous and laxe comprehension of the Author's measures, vvhath hath been the sinceritie of this Treatie, or vvhath might have been the issue of an assenting close to it, I suppose it may be obvious to everie mans reason. For my ovvn part, as I look upon this su-

perior Episcopacie, from the very first degree of its ascending, to have been in all the steps of its progress, the continual decline of pure christianitie, and advance of the Antichristian papacie; and as I am convinced from clear Scripture light, and undeniable experience, that all the pretences made for it, and its power and privileges, either from the practices, graces, virtues or sufferings of those Centuries, wherein it had its first rise and growth, are only the involutions of that strange misterie, whereby it most secretly and subtile proceeded to its most prodigious manifestation, in the revelation of the Man of sin; so I am perswaded in the same evidence, that the accommodating of faithful men with it, under whatsoever pretext within this land, shall quicklie, either prove the readvancing of its pride, domination and wickedness, or els the greater establishment of the supremacie, to the as intallible prejudice and ruine of the power and puritie of Religion, the Devils grand designe in all these unwarranted contrivances.

But the Author adds for a *salvo* to these just feares, that the foregoing passage may suggest, *that if the Spirit of our meek and lowly master, did more possess the minds both of Bishops and Presbyters, there would certainly be little or no dispute, but the sweet contest of striving who should yeeld most, and give most honor the one to the other.* Thus we find him alwayes a high pretender to Gospel rules, when they seem to make for his advantage: If he once attain to the possession of what either his phansie or interest do recommend to him, then, according to the strain of the former letters, how full is he of the high elogies of peace, & of earnest longings after it; how hateful & odious is contention & hatred, nay, it is the main antichristian character; and in the same manner now that he is for Episcopacie & its eminencie, how sweetly would he seem to commend the spirit of our meek & lowly Master. But seeing it is without all controversy, that if this spirit were indeed prevalent, not only our disputes & contests about thir matters would cease, but the very subject of them, being at best a vain invention pretending to order, vould be totally removed, my hearty wish and desire is, that the Author would rather endeavour to vvitnes his sinceritie, by a thorough and absolute conformitie, then by such partial applications.

The 9 and last consideration, which the Author offers, is anent the great and known moderation of all the late Reformers, the present reformed Churches, and of the presbyterian brethren in England concerning the episcopacy now in question. But having before answered this abundantly, I am not so much swayed with such alledgeances as here to make repetitions. Only he sayes, *It is wonderful, that we should affect so exorbitant an height of Zeal, and fervor in this point, so far beyond what can be found in any of these we have named, or any other society or party of men in the whole Christian world, either of our own or former times.* 'Tis answered, the zeal of God is so rare a thing, in this evil and hypocri-

tical generation; and it and the worlds wonder do so often trift, that I am only sorry, that we have not provoked the Author and all men to more of it; and that our reproch for Christ, and consequently the matter of our rejoicing, should amount to no more in midst of such backslidings and pervertness, then to the just and slender charge of a singular affected fervor. But yet the author saith, *that this is an excess not to be found in the vvhole Christian vvorld beside.* And if he cannot condescend on any instance, clothed with our circumstances, and exactly parallel to our case, is it not as manifest, that the generality of this boast, is a meer empty inconcludent flourish. If he love to plead with such arguments, let him produce me any one of all these Churches, Societies or Parties which he musters up, that after having experimented the evil and bitter fruits of episcopacy, and searched after its origen and warrant, unto a clear conviction of its want of divine institution, and full discovery of the delusion of its rise, and the wickedness of its tendencie, did in a manner unanimously, both by law, canon and oath abrogat and reforme from it: and when by the politick influence of Court designes and State projects, and the practices of the Devil and his instruments, the same episcopacy was restored seven times worse then of before, and so with a most plenary confirmation of all these grievances, formerly objected against it, did in the most pure and conspicuous zeal of God, that ever acted in any Nation, reject this corrupt plant, and bind themselves to maintain the true Ordinance of God, introduced in its place, and extirpat every thing thereto opposit, by a most solemn Covenant; and in consequence thereof, enjoy the Gospel in very observable povver and plenty, untill that by as gross perjury and violence, as ever the Sun beheld, this Covenant is again condemned, the Lords work and Ordinance subverted, and this old Episcopacy, not only with a sevenfold, but with a seventie and sevenfold encrease of all its corruptions and wickednesses re-established; and lastly the Supremacie, the complement of all Ecclesiastical usurpations, with an explication broader then all the pretensions of the Papacy, is superadded. For the better securing of all which abominations, after full proof made of all that abused authority and power could do against a faithful non-conforming remnant, policy at length doth instruct to propose an Accommodation, upon termes, seemingly indeed condescending, but really corroborative of the present establishment, and most visibly suppressive of any reliques of dissent, or opposition, which possibly might revive against it. Now let the Author, I say, produce us an instance of any Church or Society, thus circumstantiat, & if not only, the faithful remnant therein, but the generality of all the serious fearers of God, and true lovers of our Lord Jesus, shall not give their suffrage on our side, nay the case being thus proposed, as in

truth it stands, if even these, to whom he appeals, do not clearly declare for us, then let us beare the scorn of singularity, and what worke he shall please to cast upon us forever.

But lest the Author imagine, that vvh<sup>t</sup> I have here represented, vvith an especial regard to the strengthening of the Lords People in this Land, to vvhom none of these things are hidden or unknowvn, doth rather proceed from an apprehension of a cross verdict upon the simple question of the fixed Presidencie, from the Persons and Churches to vvhom he referres, I grant, that amongst the Reformers, and in those Churches mentioned, there may be found good men, vvho, not being led by the concernment of their own condition unto a more near and strict examination of the thing, and rather comparing its appearing moderation with the exorbitancies of Prelacy, then reducing matters to their first institution, have vvritten of it more indulgently and respectfully: But as it hath not been the experimented and trying case of any Christian Church, as it hath been of ours, and as the Authors that seeme to favour it, do all of them agree, that it is not of diuine institution, but do unanimously recommend it upon that account; so I am confident, that if the examples of the same Reformers and Churches, in occurrences of less importance, may found a probable conjecture, it may very fairly thence be concluded, that if they had been, or were now stated in the same circumstances with us, they would as far exceed us in this saint and languishing zeal, whereof we are accused, as by the Author we are now construed to exceed them. With what truth, reason or civility then the Author is pleased, according to the dull affectations of his oraculous wit, to tell the World, that there is no reason can be given of this our zeal, unless that word of the Roman Philosopher, *Superstitio est error insanus*, it is no hard matter to judge: But if he account it superstition for us, after our most convincing experiences of the wofull evils of his episcopacie, and no inferior perswasion, that the way of Presbyterie is of diuine appointment, in this matter to adhere constantly to Scripture rules, and Covenant engagements, vve freely confesse vvith the Apostle *Paul*, that after the vvay, vvwhich he calleth superstition, so vve feare the God of our Fathers, and love our Lord Iesus Christ; believing all things that are vvritten, and having hope also tovvards God, vvho in the midst of the years can, and may revive his vvork. In vvwhich profession, though the Author do judge us to be beside our selves, yet vve are ascertained, that not only all the faithful, that have any conscience in these things, but also all ingenious men, will answer for us, that Sir, we are not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

It remains, that I consider the Author's additional reflection upon our two Covenants. And as to what he prefaces, of his having sufficiently cleared, that

that the Article of the League touching prelacie, as it is there specified, doth not at all concern the Episcopacy in question, I beleeve I have as sufficiently cleared, both the Authors impertinency in this restriction, and also the unquestionable concern of both our covenants, from other heads, in the episcopacy controverted. But here he insinuates, that of late he is informed, *That we now flie to the other Article of the Covenant, ingaging us to maintain the Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland, as it was then in being, and hereupon he wishes, that we would impartially consider, whether the present Episcopacy be inconsistent with that Discipline & Government, or if it will not rather be found to be corroborative and perfective of it, as apt to keep it in more union, & so to make it stronger, and more lasting then it formerly proved, or likely would be, if it were again restored.* It is answered. It is not here objected, that by swearing to maintain the then established Discipline and Government, we did not virtually renounce, and abjure the present controverted Episcopacie; no, both the Reformation that had then so recently preceeded, and the Reformation that hath since so directly overturned it, do make this point too evident to be denied by the Author, or any pretending to common sense. But the summe of what is here proposed is, that we were not well advised in that our Oath, as having thereby excluded a special mean for the preservation of that which we mostly intended. In return whereunto, I need not say, that every inconsideration is not an just exception to make void an Oath; the Authors own inconsideration in this very allegiance is too manifest, to reduce us to that strait. He saith in effect, *That the present Episcopacy is not inconsistent with Presbyterian Government.* And is it not a lamentable thing, that thir Churches and Nations should have been so long in so fatal a distraction, meerly for want of such a happie discoverie; nay that the very vexed Bishops, should not for their own peace, have been so wise, as still to bear with and maintain a thing nothing repugnant to their pretensions? But to be a little more serious, I say true Presbyterian - government doth not admit, amongst the Lords Ministers, of any stated imparity, either in power, prerogative or presidency, one, or all of which is the very form of the controverted Episcopacie; therefore they are (what all men hitherto constantly deemed them to be) utterly inconsistent. But the Author sayes, *That Episcopacy by preserving union, is perfective of Presbyterie.* And I grant that any lawfull mean preserving Union, is indeed perfective of this, as of all other Government: But seeing that Episcopacie is not only not at all a mean subservient to Presbyterie or its Union; what ever it may be to Government, or its Union in general, but is also in it self unwarrantable and unlawful, and in effect as to Union, never found to be otherwise more conducibile then Presbyterie, but either by the destroying; or tyrannous suppressing of truth and the love thereof, by which the right

side of all contentions are maintained, I can scarce refrain from censuring the Authors fore going observe, as pitifully groundless. It is true, our Presbyterie did not retain union as it was desired; but what then? If our corruptions and sins do either frustrat the efficacy, or avert the blessing of the best of means, is therefore the mean it self to be condemned? Or if where the Lord hath left no choise, a mean shall be devised by man more promising in appearance, as to that wherein the mean ordained hath not, through our fault, been so succesful, and withall, if this invention shall be infallibly attended with far more pernicious consequences, ought we either in conscience, or prudence, to shuffle out the former, to make place for the later? Certainlie as these things do exactly quadrat to the case of our accidental differences here objected, so the changing of the Lords ordinance for a humane device, upon such a pretence, is liker to *Jeroboam's* policie, who for the establishment and quiet of his Kingdome, set up his Calves in lieu of the Lords Sanctuarie, then that paritie and straightnes of heavenlie wisdom, which the Lord requires. I might here adde, that the want of the Lord's blessing, and the parties their greater power, and, for the most part, insolent pride, being duely considered, the *Oligarchik* model of the Author's Episcopacie, seemes to be far more obnoxious to the objected divisions, then the lowly and equall Presbyterie, that our Lord hath institute: And that *desaſto*, there is nothing in that state whereunto we can referre their prevention, except unto the over-awe either of the papal Tirannie, or of a more absurd Supremacie, which we see every where to be the ultimat progress of these vain delusions: But having formerly met with almost the same alledgeance, I proceed.

The Authour ads, *And again they would consider, that if the substance be saved in the present model, their obligation is abundantly preserved.* 'Tis Ans. Seeing the thing to be principally attended, both in the interpretation and observation of an Oath, is that which was chiefly intended in the framing and taking of it, and which is indeed the substance of the Oath, although of its subject abstractly considered it may be only a circumstance, the distinction as here applied appeares to be more captious then pertinent. Nowv that the thing chieflie intended in that article, to preserve the Discipline and Government of the Church of *Scotland*, as then in being, was to preserve Presbyterie from the reinvaſion of all these corruptious, from which it had been before so lathie vindicat and reformed; and that of these corruptious, the controverted presidencie or constant Moderatorship was one, and that the very first, is so certain and notour, that I cannot but marvel at the Authors so perverse disputings in the contrarie. But he sayes, *If no ship nor circumstance of the then Presbyterian government might be altered even to the better, then is the*  
next



*next part of the Article anent uniformity, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches, illusive, and a perfect cheat, in as much as though the same rule should in order to uniformity call for an alteration, yet there could be no receding from the then frame of the Church of Scotland.*

Thus the Author according to his accustomed deceit, when he would persuade to an alteration, notwithstanding that he and his associars, do manifestly intend and prosecute it with all the might and craft that they can adhibit, yet for to delude us to a compliance, slicketh not, by insinuating the things in controversie to be but chips and circumstances; flatly to contradict and condemn the violence of their own practices. But, seeing that I have already proven from cleare Scripture & undeniable reason, that this constant presidency, in steed of being a *chip* or *circumstance*, is in effect repugnant to that paritie which our Lorth hath commanded, and wherein true Presbyterie is essentially founded, and therefore was by us ejected, and the discipline and Government, sworn to be preserved in the Covenant, established in its place, 'tis evident that all here excepted by the Author is but a meer cavillation. In answer whereunto, it may well be affirmed, that it saires vwith the Covenant as with the Truth it self; no such redargution of all calumnies objected as by its own evidence. The article questioned, binds in the first place to the *preservation of the reformed Religion in the Church of Scotland, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government against the common enemy*; wherein, it is certain, that as the truth in all the heads discovered by divine light, and after much wrastring recovered from mens corruptions, was directly and plainly ingaged unto; so such extrinseck and lesser circumstances, as are in their own nature variable, and only determinable by a prudence regulat by the General Scripture-rules of order and edification, and were not at that time either questioned or reformed, are not in this obligation of our Oath otherwise comprehended, or thereby rendred unalterable.

In the next place, the Article obliges to the endeavour of reformation in the Kingdomes of England and Ireland in the same points, *according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches*: Which qualification adjected, although through the deceitfulness of men, it hath given the principal occasion both to perversions and calumnies, yet I am assured, that as in itself it is most sound and rational; so it may testifie on our part a most fair and ingenuous candor: in as much, as although the Englishes did first seek to us, and willingly & freely ingaged with us, to the maintainance of the reformation whercunto we had then attained; yet in the confidence of the truth wherein it was bottomed, and that it might appeare to the world, how little we were either addicted to any thing as our own, or inclined to abuse and impose upon their distress, we agreed to Covenant to the  
endeavours

endeavours of their reformation, not precisely according to our example, though we were fully perswaded of its divine varrant, but according to the unerring rule of the word of God: (to which we were alwayes, and are still ready to submit all our ingagments and perswasions) and the example of the best reformed Churches, the best arbiter of all exterior indifferences.

Now after this cause, follows the obligation to Uniformity in these termes, *And shall endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three Kingdomes, to the nearest conjunction and uniformity, &c.* Which being the part of our Oath, whereon our Author doth at present trifle, I shall not trouble my Reader to rectifie his misrepresentation, as if it were the common work of uniformity, and not *Englands* particular Reformation, that were referred to the Word of God: But seeing by the obvious tenor of the whole Article, the preservation of the reformed Religion in *Scotland*, and the Reformation of *England* and *Ireland*, according to the Word of God, are premised as middles conducing, and tendencies certainly concentring in this conjunction wished for, I am confident, every ingenuous man must acknowledge both the consistency of our Oath, and the vanitie of our adversaries sophistrie. And therefore it is answered.

1. That suppose, the intended uniformity and conjunction did require an alteration; yet seeing the disconformity of either part, maketh place for it, & even perfection it self & imperfection, by reason of their disconformity, are capable of such a designe, the necessity of an alteration to be made on both parts cannot be thence inferred. So that the Author's conclusion, from the unalterableness of *Scotlands* frame, that the Article of uniformity is *illusorie*, and in plain terms a perfect cheat, is pitifully claudicant, and unworthy of both his judgment and gravity.

2. Although that the things Covenanted to be preserved in *Scotland*, as being very accurately tried and convincingly found to be agreeable to the word of God, are in effect both from their varrant, and our Oath unalterable; yet, seeing that by reason of our sublunary state, there are several external circumstances attending the worship, as well as the discipline and Government of the Church, neither positively determined by the word of God, nor comprehended in this our Oath for preservation; that in these, there is a latitude on all parts left to the improvement of providence, and gratification of charitie, for the more easie and happie obtaining of the uniformitie Covenanted, is in it self evident, and the very subject and intendment of this last clause, as to any thing which may be thereby imported over & above what the preceeding parts of the article do contain. But,

3. The palpable fallacie of the Author's objection, is, that he falsely supposeth, not only that the word of God may in order to uniformitie call

for an alteration in *Scotlands* frame covenanted to be preserved, but that even the swearers of this oath did thereto referre, as not being fully ascertained and ultimately determined as to the congruities of that very establishment which in the same article they swear to maintain: whereas, it is manifest from the tenor of the article and all other circumstances, that as we in *Scotland* were assuredly perswaded, that the things whereunto we had attained, and which we swear to preserve, were according to the word of God, and *England* also by concurring with us in the same ingagement did thereunto assent; so it was in the same common perswasion, that we engaged to endeavour *Englands* reformation according to the same rule, and did, in the holding and not altering of these obligations with a just accommodation of undetermined circumstances, jointly vow and hope for the above mentioned uniformities.

4. As the certain conformities of *Scotlands* then reformation to the word of God, doth directly contradict the Authors supposition, and the alterableness of the then constitution of Government in so far as we are sworn to preserve it, is very consistent with the vowed uniformities whereby the Authors argument is utterly ruined; so we do constantly acknowledge the same word of God to be the supreme and unerring rule, whereunto we heartily submit; and therefore, if the Author can shew that this rule, either upon the account of uniformity or any other, doth require an alteration of that Government whereunto we are bound, it is in vain to redargue us from pretended inconsistencies in the words and contexture of our Oath, seeing this is a direct and plain method by which we are most willing to be tried.

The Author adds, that if no hoofs or hair of the *Scottish* modell can be altered, though both *Scripture*, the example of the best reformed Churches, and the vowed uniformities should require it, then ought it instead of according to the word of God, &c. to be rather according to the present forme of the Church of *Scotland*. But 1. Waving the fraud and scorn of the Author's *hooves* and *haires*, whereof it is certain, that his fixed Presidency, unless so far as it is an excrementitious superfluity, can be called none, why doth the Author cavil? If the *Scripture* and the example of the best Reformed Churches, do require an alteration of our modell, let him shew it, and there is an end. 2. I have already given a cleare account, wherefore the ingagement in the Covenant to Reformation in *England* did referre to the word of God &c. rather than to any particular example. 3. If upon the matter, *Englands* covenanted Reformation in Discipline & Government according to the Word of God, &c. do in effect resolve in an exact conformity to our then constitution, doth it therefore follow, that this part of our Oath is either a cheat or an abuse? God forbid; the

Rule is too sacred to give ground to such a consequence: And certainly the Author's second thoughts will correct his rashness.

But the Author subjoines, that how this understanding of the Rule of *Englands* Reformation according to the *VVord* of God, as certainly introductive of the then *Scottish* model, would have past with our *English Brethren*, and particularly with these present at the framing of that Covenant, may easily be imagined. It is answered 1. The question here mainly agitat, is, neither how the *Englshes* understood the ingagment of the Covenant in order to their own Reformation, nor yet what may be its real import, but plainly what we stand bound to by vertue of that article, obliging us to preserve the Reformed Religion in the Church of *Scotland* in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government; and that thereby we are obliged to disown and reject the Authors Episcopacy and fixed Presidency, from which our Government was at that time expressly reformed, is that which I am perswaded he himself dare not seriously deny. 2. Whatever meaning interest, passion or prejudice may possibly devise, yet that the words, according to the *VVord* of God, &c. are in themselves most plain, safe and sound cannot be controverted. But 3. That under this very form of words both *England* did give, and *Scotland* did obtain a sufficient assurance for the setting up of Presbyterian Government in *England* as it was at that time established in *Scotland*, is no hard matter to explain; in as much, as not only the Word of God, the declared Rule, doth thereto strictly and antecedentlie tye, as hath been made out; but whoever herewith considered the knowledge the *Englshes* had of our then constitution, the affectionat sympathie they had testified, both in our labour and victorie vvhcreby it vvas attained, their frequent and significant insinuations in publick, in privar, in print and in speeches to this purpose, their expresse ingaging to the preservation of our frame, their brotherlie covenanting and concurring vvith us for the cause of God, and many other circumstances, vvill vvithout hesitation conclude, that we had as pregnant grounds of persvasion of there being like minded with us in this matter, as could be demanded or expected by ingenuous men, from a nation at that time so unsettled and discomposed. And therefore, seeing there was nothing for several years preceeding, more clearlie and distinctlie held forth by us, then that we judged the form of Government then in being among us, to be the only Church Government agreeable to the word of God, I think we may well take the Author's suggestion, as if the *Englshes* would never have passed this sense and meaning of the words, according to the word of God, to be only a cunning hint, to colour a confidence which cannot be avowed. It is true, that in process of time, the love of truth and zeal of  
God

God did much abate, & error abound in that Nation; whence to many who desired a sutable licence, the just severitie of Presbyterie became uneasy and odious: but as that doth nothing convel the former arguments by me adduced, so it is no less true, that the founder and better part of *England*, not carried away by the present defection, do still own Presbyterian Government as by us asserted, to be the only Government that our Lord has appointed in his Church.

But our Author tells us, *yea, it is not unknown how careful one of the English Commissioners was to have that clause inserted, according to the word of God, and how secure he thought himself and his Countrey by that expression from the inroad of Scottish Presbyterie upon them notwithstanding that former Article premised in favours of it.* Well, admit this to be a truth, what then? If one of them was a deceiver, & deceived & yet manifestly taken in his own craftiness, what is either the work or the Covenant the worse? If confident errors or treacheries be sufficient to confute the truth the Author needed not have called this witness to his assistance; but seeing it is most certain that whoever that person was, and whatever might have been his peculiar opinion, and communication or correspondence with the author in it, neither was there any such thing openly declared or treated, nor hath it the least foundation in the words under debate; but on the contrary is by them as manifestly confuted, as the Author now is, to what he formerly professed most repugnant: the thing is scarce worthy this my reflection; and yet behold the conclusion, that the Author draws from it.

Thus, saith he, *were the Contrivers of that Covenant busied in patching it up, to outwit one another by words and clauses, how incoherent and discordant soever, to save their different interests and opinions, and to make it strong in odium tertii, how vreake soever it might prove to discerning men, by disagreeing and jarring with it self, and a very Babel, by the divided and confused language of its Architects.* And thus our Author having abandoned all Conscience of the Oath of God; doth also cast off all shame, and in his envy standeth not openly to contradict and blaspheme. If he had premised any thing to give so much as a colour to this incoherence, discordance and confusion objected; somewhat in excuse of such conclusion might be indulged to his passion and interest: But when nothing hath been alledged, except a blind conjecture of some persons their different apprehensions of the soundest and plainest form of words, contrarie to the undeniable evidence of the truth it self, and from which inconvenience the most pure light of divine revelation hath not been exempted, upon thir grounds to inferre an accusation against the holy Covenant in the termes we have heard, can only be the effect of a most wicked indignations

nation and apostatick malice. *Lord bow downe thine eare and heare, open Lord thine eyes, and see, and hear the words of this man, who hath set himself to reproach thy truth and work, which thou hast manifestly owned; and save I beseech thee thy People out of the hands of these evill men, that all the Churches may know, that thou art the holy Lord God of truth, who searcheth the reins and heart.* And therefore in return to this contempt and scorn, I shall only here briefly adde to what I have in the former Discourse observed to this purpose. 1. That all the forged ambiguities and inconsistencies, that either the deceit of Hypocrites, or perverseness of open adversaries, have hitherto laboured to fix upon the words and frame of this Oath, are not only the fate of truth, but according to its proper vertue, by the serious consideration thereof in its own light, most readily and satisfyingly salved. 2. As the Covenant was attended by a most signal power, and presence from on high; so its sincere prosecution, was constantly blessed with a very beautiful concord; and whoever divided from its genuine meaning and purpose, did quickly also abandon the reverence and regard thereof, which he once professed. 3. That not only the forsakers of the Covenant do relinquish it without repentance, and for the most part, by the irritation of their own guilt and shame, are exasperate to irrational railing and rage: but if the revilings and persecutions of the ungodly World, be the badge of truth, the Covenant hath from the beginning been thereby very notably confirmed; and all its true followers may herein rejoice and be exceeding glade, as being by the Lord pronounced blessed. 4. That as the beaurie and glorie of the work of God, were very visibly promoted both by the Covenant and its contrivers, and confusion formerly, and calamity and wasting consumption now, the certain and manifest effects of mens severing and backsliding from it: and as in that furious storme that broke off and destroyed the branches, the root of the Kingdome was by this bond made sure, until the time of our restitution wherein it made the first and most airy appearance; so the remembrance of these things, may yet be ground of hope, that the Lord will arise and have mercy upon Zion, and in place of the Babel-confusions wherewith these Masters of confusion and rebuilders of Babilon do upbraid us, cause his work appeare unto his Servants and his glory unto their Children.

In the last place, the Author saith, *He heareth that some take the Romish Hierarchie in the National Covenant, for the same with our present Episcopacy; and that by vertue of the Gloss of Glasgow which yet, he saith, doth grossly corrupt the Text: For the Romish Hierarchie is the Romish Hierarchie, and no other; nor hath any man, or assembly of men, even such as have most of the spirit in them, power to bind a sense upon the words, so different from, and opposue to their clear and genuine signification.*



*nification.* I cannot here in the close insist on all the impertinencies huddled up in these few lines, though by the Romish hierarchie abjured in the National Covenant, there is no doubt meant, not only *Romes* proper hierarchie, usurping and pretending to a domination over us: but also, all such like corruption in Ecclesiastick government, whether in its rise, growth or consummation, under which it is manifest, that the controverted Episcopacy as being the first workings of that mystery, must necessarily be comprehended. Yet it was not by this clause alone of this Covenant, that this Episcopacy was conceived to be abjured amongst us; in as much, as the argument that may be gathered from it for this abjuration, is both cumulative and concludent above exception, viz. that albeit, that it doth principally relate to heads of doctrine, and the maintainance of the truth therein contrary to the errors of poperie, yet it doth also extend itself against all manner of Superstition & corruption: and therefore doth not only reject the *Popes* worldly monarchy and wicked Hierarchie, whereby, without question, all the degrees, occasions & tendencies, either of worldly domination, or undue Elation of Christs Ministres over his flock, or among themselves are disclaimed; but thereby we do expressly joine our selves to the Church of *Scotland* as then reformed in doctrine, faith, religion and discipline, promising and swearing by the great name of the Lord our God, that we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and Discipline of this Kirk, and shall defend the same according to our vocation and power all the dayes of our lives. Under vvhich heads, especially that of Discipline, according to the usual phrase of these times, as it is vvithout controversy, that the Government then in being vv as contained; so if vve consider, that the taking and subscribing of this Covenant in the year 1581. and 1590. was designedly enjoined by the general Assembly for the confirmation of Presbyterian Government then completely perfected, and unanimously agreed to in the year 1581. and universally settled and established in the year 1590: it is not possible, that in this matter any shadow of scruple should remain.

I might here adde for a further evidence, that when within a few years thereafter, King *James* and his Court-faction took upon them to innovat that forme, by the introduction of Kirk-commissioners, and constant Moderators or fixed presidents; the faithful who opposed these courses did, as it appears by their writings and publick protestations yet extant, very freely testify against them, as perjurious defections and breaches of the oath of God: which is an undeniable proof of the sense wherein it was taken. But the plain and obvious account of this oath, which I have already exhibit, is more then sufficient, to vindicat the consonancy and soundness of that inter-

pretation made by the forementioned Assembly, against the author's identick and ridiculous reasoning, to wit, *that therefore the Romish hierarchy in that Oath cannot contain the present episcopacy, because forsooth, the Romish hierarchy is the Romish hierarchy.* And no less ignorant and lascivient confidence, whereby he goeth about, not only impudently to decry a most certain and cleare explication as *gross and shameful*, but impertinently to defie or mock the Spirit of the Lord, and all thereby conducted. I might in this place moreover subjoine, that admitting, for the Author's more full redargution, that the Assembly had lapsed in their exposition; yet seeing it was materially agreeable to truth, & we are thereunto bound by our sacred oath, not so much assertorie of the justnes of the explanation, as positivè, renouncing the thing therein contained; this error in the manner, could not by any rule dissolve the force of our oath, but the certainty and lawfulness of our abjuration by this oath, both of Prelacy and Episcopacy, and all their aspiring degrees, hath been already by me so largely and evidently declared, that any addition were altogether superfluous.

As for what the Author tells us in the last place, *that the Presbyterian brethren in former times did not think themselves by that Covenant obliged to Separate from the Synods wherein Bishops presided, as their practices do evidence.* I am perswaded I have so abundantly cleared the difference of their case from ours, and thereby reconciled their and our practices in a most agreeable consistency, that the very simple noticing of this reflection may almost be accounted an excess. I might here adde that if Presbyterian government were offered to be truly restored upon its own proper foundation, and no thing imposed beside this constant President, both eligible & depofible by the Courts, wherein he moderats; the practice of withdrawing would be liable to more probable exceptions but seeing the very lowest condescendence that probably can be conjectured, is immensely distant from this hypothesis; and the exigence of a testimony flowing from our present unrepented backslidings, with the far more probable ensuing of evill then good, upon a conjunction with the persons, and in the other circumstances obvious in our present condition, doe according to these grounds and rules declared in my first Discourse, still perswade to a humble, tender, prudent and witnesing separation, I do here put a period to these debates.

F I N I S.